DESTINATION: ELIMINATION

Ending Communicable Diseases in the Americas

PAHO

Pan American Health Organization

World Health Organization

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE Americas

History shows that when people work together, communicable diseases can be eliminated. Following a global effort, smallpox was eradicated worldwide in 1980, and just 14 years later, polio was eliminated from the Region of the Americas.

Since then, rubella, congenital rubella syndrome, and neonatal tetanus have also been eliminated, and remarkable progress has been made against other diseases and conditions. By late 2019, 14 countries of the Region were free of malaria, six had eliminated mother-to-child transmission of HIV, and only one focus[1] of river blindness remained in the Americas.

None of these achievements would have been possible without the commitment of governments, agencies, and individuals from diverse fields and across communities and countries.

By building on and learning from these successes, the Region of Americas has the potential to eliminate many more communicable diseases in our lifetime. The PAHO Elimination Initiative points the way.

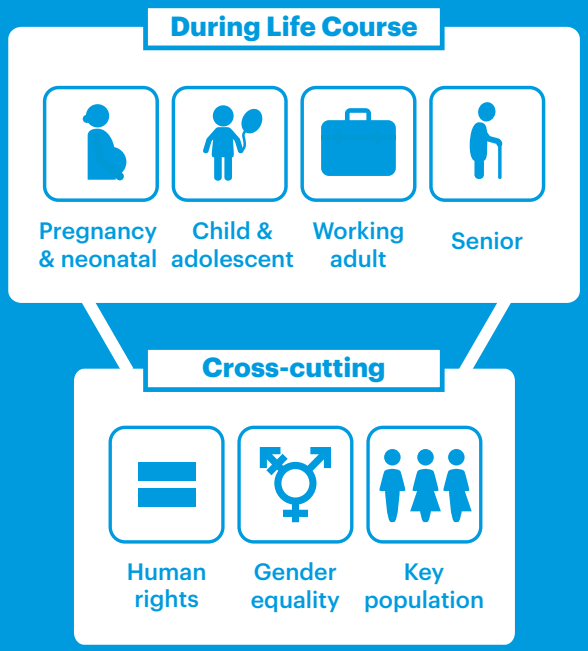
[1] Focus: the principal site of an infection or other disease

A goal within reach

The Elimination Initiative is a major strategic and political opportunity for governments, civil societies, academia, the private sector and communities to eliminate more than 30 communicable diseases and related conditions in the Americas by 2030.

We know it can be done. The Region of Americas is considered both an incubator of innovative public health practices and a worldwide leader in elimination practices. But more work lies ahead. It can only be achieved through local, national, and regional cooperation.

Four lines of action



The Elimination Initiative provides an integrated framework based on four lines of action.

Stepping up integration of health systems and service delivery

Strengthening existing programs and community approaches through continued innovation to better integrate and synergize primary health care services. This means creating and reinforcing linkages among health provider networks, community services, disease elimination programs, and environmental health initiatives to optimize prevention and treatment while controlling costs.

Reinforcing strategic health surveillance and information systems

Increasing the capacity of health information systems at the national and subnational levels to improve data collection, analysis, and monitoring of progress towards elimination.

Addressing the environmental and social determinants of health

Monitoring and addressing key interacting factors that impact health, such as poverty, gender equity, access to clean water and safe air, and effective waste management, among other determinants. This includes strengthening community infrastructures to prevent environmental contamination and supporting financial investments that address these determinants and socioeconomic gaps.

Strengthening governance, stewardship, and finance

Strengthening leadership and accountability by mobilizing participation of key players such as local governments, civil society, faith-based organizations, business, philanthropy, and the academic sector. This includes streamlining the implementation of interventions while sharing the cost of service delivery.

Integration to achieve targets for each disease

Programmatic objectives for each disease

On our way to 2030: Bringing inspiration and innovation to health

We don’t need to reinvent the wheel.

The essentials are largely in place throughout the Region of Americas: health promotion campaigns, universal vaccination programs, partnerships, and a “treat all” approach to achieve elimination. The Elimination Initiative seeks to integrate and synergize existing resources, technologies, and strategies at different levels of society in each country.

Individual countries are not expected to address all the targeted diseases. Instead, each country’s efforts should focus on those communicable diseases that have the greatest impact on the health of their local populations.


A decade of elimination successes
2010-2019
Human rabies, dog-mediated
Mexico 2019
Neonatal tetanus
Regional 2017
Foot-and-mouth disease in domesticated bovids
Brazil 2018
Ecuador 2015
Peru 2018
Suriname 2018
HIV, mother-to-child transmission and congenital syphilis
Anguilla 2017
Antigua and Barbuda 2017
Bermuda 2017
Cayman Islands 2017
Cuba 2015
Montserrat 2017
St. Kitts and Nevis 2017
Onchocerciasis
Colombia 2013
Ecuador 2014
Guatemala 2016
Mexico 2015
Rubella
Regional 2015
Chagas disease, vector (whole country)
Guatemala 2019
Honduras 2018
Nicaragua 2018
Paraguay 2018
Malaria
Argentina 2019
Paraguay 2018
Chagas disease transmission by blood transfusion
Mexico 2015
Measles
Regional 2015
Congenital rubella syndrome
Regional 2015
Poliomyelitis
Regional 1994
Trachoma
Mexico 2017

The people at most risk of communicable diseases are those living in situations of vulnerability, such as poor populations, indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants, migrants, and LGBTQI individuals.

The Elimination Initiative will positively impact the health and social well-being of these communities as well as the society as a whole. Commitment to the Elimination Initiative is a pledge to create thriving communities throughout the Americas.

> **My vision for the Americas is of a society free from inequality** where everyone, particularly the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people, can live healthy, meaningful, productive lives.
>
> We need both continued vigilance and concerted action if we are to protect and sustain the hard-fought gains that we have achieved with communicable diseases. The year 2030 is only a decade away, and the world is watching.

Dr. Carissa F. Etienne
Director of the Pan American Health Organization

REPUBLICA DEL PARAGUAY

ANOPHELES DARLINGI HUEVOS DE MOSQUITO

CORREO

₲.1.50

W.H.O. DIA DE LA SALUD 7. ABRIL 1962

DE LA RUE DE COLOMBIA

MOSDÓSSY

Paraguay's success against malaria

In 2018, decades of dedication paid off when Paraguay was certified by WHO as malaria-free. Paraguay had launched a comprehensive plan in 2011 to strengthen malaria prevention, identification, diagnosis, and treatment.

A key lesson from that initiative was the importance of stopping the reintroduction of the disease from other endemic countries in the Americas.

> **Success stories like Paraguay's show what is possible.**
> If malaria can be eliminated in one country, it can be eliminated in all countries.
>
> **Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus**
> WHO Director General

Caribbean countries lead by example: Elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis

Eliminating the transmission of infectious agents from mother to child during pregnancy, childbirth, and breastfeeding has been a top priority for Caribbean countries. A mother with HIV has a 15-45% likelihood of passing the infection to her child if she is not treated. Untreated syphilis during pregnancy can have severe consequences for a baby, including premature birth, low birthweight, and even death. Other sequelae include skeletal malformations and inflammatory manifestations affecting the eyes, ears, and joints.

To prevent these outcomes, countries throughout the Caribbean have adopted evidence-based interventions to reduce the risk of transmission of infections from mothers to their babies to the lowest level possible and are investing in making quality antenatal care available to all. As a result, the HIV transmission rate in the Caribbean as a whole has dropped by nearly half since 2010; in 2018 alone, 1,300 new infections were prevented in children. WHO officially recognized the dual elimination of HIV and syphilis in Cuba in 2015 and in Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Bermuda, the Cayman Islands, Montserrat, and St. Kitts and Nevis in 2017, setting an example for other countries in the Americas and the world.

"The elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis is, of course, a result of a strong political commitment to public health and making the health of mothers, children, and families a regional priority," said Dr. Timothy Harris, Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis and lead health spokesman for CARICOM. "This is a success story we intend to improve upon even more in the future."

Making History In Public Health

Since its inception in 1902, PAHO has been instrumental in major hemispheric and global accomplishments in disease elimination. The PAHO Elimination Initiative seeks to protect these landmark achievements and to build on the momentum and lessons they provide to reach new milestones.

This is an ambitious effort, but the prospects for its success are solid — if public health professionals and allies across our Region continue collaborating while forging new relationships within and beyond the health sector.

Together, we can make history again.

Candidates for elimination by 2030

ELIMINATION	ELIMINATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH	MAINTAIN ELIMINATION	ERADICATION
AIDS Cervical cancer Chagas disease Congenital Chagas Congenital syphilis Cholera Echinococcosis/hydatidosis Fascioliasis Gonorrhea Mother-to-child transmission of Hepatitis B Hepatitis B & C infection Leishmaniasis Leprosy Lymphatic filariasis Malaria Mother-to-child transmission of HIV Onchocerciasis Plague Rabies (dog-mediated) Schistosomiasis Soil-transmitted helminthiasis Syphilis Taeniasis/cysticercosis Trachoma Tuberculosis	Open defecation Polluting biomass cooking fuels	Congenital rubella syndrome Measles Neonatal tetanus Poliomyelitis Rubella Yellow fever epidemics	Foot-and-mouth disease in domestic bovids Yaws

The Elimination Initiative uses the current World Health Organization (WHO) definitions of control, elimination, and eradication for specific diseases and conditions.

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