

PAHO Caribbean Subregional e-Bulletin

Office of Subregional Program Coordination, Caribbean

May-July, 2020

About this e-Bulletin

This e-bulletin was created to provide a snapshot of the dedicated work of PAHO's Caribbean Subregional Office. This issue covers projects carried out between May and July 2020 and contains a special section on COVID-19-related activities

HIGHLIGHTS

Climate Change and COVID-19

The EU-funded project on “**Strengthening Climate Resilient Health Systems in the Caribbean**” was signed on 20 June. Actions to address COVID-19 have been integrated into the activities of the Grant.



Risk communication and community engagement

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the Caribbean Development Bank launched the “**Stronger Together 2020**” campaign, promoting mental well-being during times of stress and crisis, like COVID-19 and the hurricane season.



Procurement of COVID-19 related supplies

PAHO supports the region in accessing personal protective equipment and other COVID-19 related supplies



New technical guidance for COVID-19

Specific guidance considering the Caribbean context and needs were produced including:



- 225,000 molecular detection testing kits were sent to Caribbean countries and the Caribbean Public Health Agency
- Collaborated with CARICOM and the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Agency (CDEMA) in developing a procurement protocol for consolidated purchases.
- Resuming non-essential international travel in the Caribbean in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic
- Caribbean Shelter Guide: COVID-19 Considerations

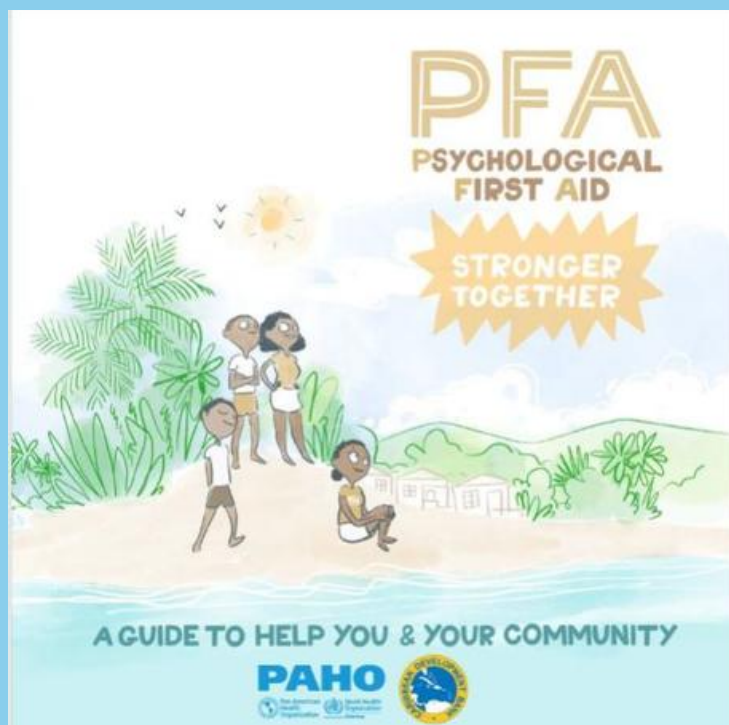
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Featured Publication: Psychological First Aid (PFA) Guide

The revised edition of the PFA illustrated booklet, developed by PAHO and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), is a tool to help people care for themselves and their communities, during crisis situations like COVID-19 and the hurricane season. The booklet uses an easy-to-read format and Caribbean inspired graphics to explain the elements of PFA.



IN THE NEXT ISSUE

Analysis of the Human Resources for
Health Challenges in the Caribbean
amidst COVID-19

Recognizing Caribbean Wellness
Day (CWD) and CWD Week of
activities

PAHO Caribbean Subregional Response to COVID-19

Office of Subregional Program Coordination, Caribbean

May-July, 2020

RESPONSE PILLARS

-  Coordination, Planning, and Monitoring
-  Risk Communication and Community Engagement
-  Surveillance, Rapid Response Teams, and Case Investigation
-  Points of Entry
-  National Laboratories
-  Infection Prevention and Control
-  Case Management
-  Operational Support and Logistics
-  Maintaining Essential Health Services during the Pandemic

Pillar 1: Coordination, planning and monitoring

Support subregional leadership and governance

PAHO works in coordination with Member States, partners, other United Nation agencies, and international donors to foster a multi-partner coordination to the pandemic. Our technical officers are embedded within many of the subregion’s national emergency operations centers.

We actively participate in the CARICOM response to COVID at the political level, including regular multisectoral coordination meetings with CARICOM, CDEMA, the University of the West Indies (UWI), the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States.

Pillar 2: Risk communication and community engagement

Information & capacity building resources on COVID-19

The Caribbean Node of the Virtual Campus in Public Health has incorporated the section, **Information and Capacity Building Resources on COVID-19**.

Links to OpenWHO courses, PAHO webinars, case studies and other resources are also available:

<https://caribbean.campusvirtualsp.org/>



Caribbean's Node of Virtual Campus for Public Health

Integration of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) into COVID-19 responses

The second edition of the PAHO self-learning “PFA in disaster management in the Caribbean” course integrating COVID-19 will be soon be available.

Bi-weekly sessions of the MHPSS roster of Caribbean mental health providers, focal points from the Ministries of Health and subregional partners are being held and an excel-based mapping tool was developed to track activities in the Caribbean, using the Inter-Agency Standing Committee globally recommended principles.



PAHO-UTT Webinar on CO-EXISTING with COVID-19: An Epidemiological Perspective
17 Jul 2020 - 17 Jul 2020



Webinar for Communicators on Stigma related to COVID-19 and Mental Health
9 Jul 2020 - 9 Jul 2020



MHPSS/COVID-19 series: A Closer Look at the Needs of Older Adults
2 Jul 2020 - 2 Jul 2020

Webinars and knowledge sharing: Keeping the Caribbean informed

The Caribbean Node of the Virtual Campus in Public Health (VCPH) incorporated the section, Information and Capacity Building Resources on COVID-19. It includes advice to the public, COVID-19 technical guidance and links to official documents. Links to OpenWHO courses, PAHO webinars and other resources are available here: <https://caribbean.campusvirtualsp.org/>

Webinars included: Clinical Management of COVID-19, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support during COVID-19 for adolescents, the Continuation of HIV Services during COVID-19 and Covering mental health and COVID-19 for regional journalists. These session were shared on our FaceBook page @PAHOWHOCaribbean and on PAHO TV on Youtube. They are also accessible on the SPC website in "Events".

Two videos on safe water and conserving water have also been produced: Handwashing while saving water and Mixing chlorine for environmental disinfection as part of COVID19.

Stronger Together 2020 Campaign

Funds from the PAHO/CDB project on mental health and psychosocial support in disaster management were repurposed to include two COVID-19 related activities. This allowed for the adaptation and expansion of the 2019 Stronger Together campaign to incorporate COVID-19. Click to listen to the jingle and share the campaign materials.



COVID-19 HANGOUTS WITH YOUTH

**How is life under lockdown?
Are you getting used to it?
Are you bored or feeling lonely?
You are not alone.**

Join our weekly hangouts for a conversation with other young people.
Every Wednesday from 3 to 4 PM EST
Join at: <http://tiny.cc/COVID19Hangouts>

#iThrive #COVID19



PAHO Pan American Health Organization World Health Organization unicef

COVID-19 Hangouts

PAHO launched a weekly COVID-19 Hangouts with youth in the Caribbean. Six sessions were held so far.

The young people share their thoughts and feelings about the lock down measures and coping mechanisms. Stay tuned to our website to find out about the next session.

Pillar 3: Surveillance, rapid response teams, and case investigation

Training

The office of Subregional Program Coordination served as a liaison between Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, the PAHO Virtual Campus and OpenWHO for the **translation of the course 'How to Put on and Remove Personal Protective Equipment', into Dutch.**

Human resource capacity in the areas of epidemiology and surveillance and core capacities of the International Health Regulations, were strengthened, through the delivery of **on-line facilitator-led courses via the PAHO virtual campus.** Courses in **Advanced Epidemiology** (44 participants from 10 countries) and **Surveillance** (23 participants from 6 Caribbean countries) were successfully completed. Visit the [campus](#) to register.



Pillar 4: Points of Entry

Technical Guidance for COVID-19

The office provides on-going technical advice on step-down procedures for public health and social measures to countries and territories of the Caribbean.

Guidance on resuming non-essential international travel in the Caribbean in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and in compliance with the provisions of the International Health Regulations was produced and is available [here](#).

Pillar 6: Infection prevention and control (IPC)

Procurement of PPE

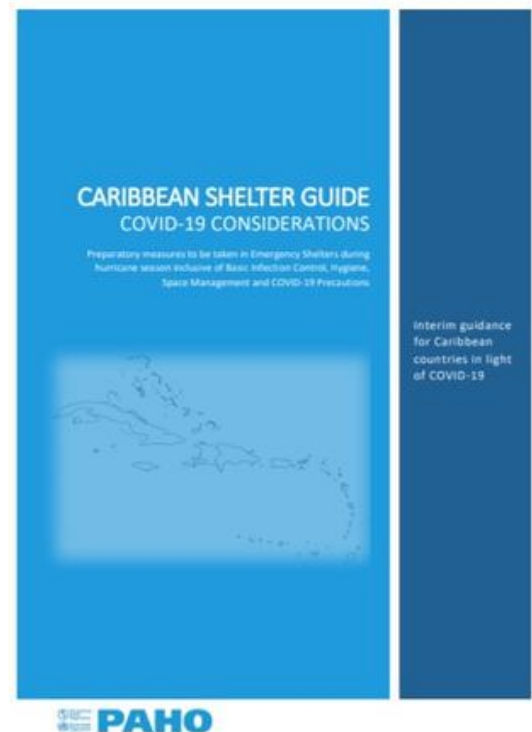
Healthcare workers in 15 Caribbean countries are better protected to assist in the COVID-19 response thanks to a generous donation of over 11,000 N95 respirators from the Caribbean Confederation of Credit Unions and the Office of Subregional Program Coordination.



Caribbean Shelter Guide

Most shelters in the Caribbean are community centers, schools, or churches, that are limited in size. The COVID-19 distancing requirements subsequently reduced the number of persons a shelter can accommodate during the hurricane season.

This document reinforces some measures to follow per international emergency shelter protocols, factoring in conditions for spacing between beds/cots, recreation areas and ventilation, according to The Sphere Handbook, FEMA, and Australian Red Cross. The Caribbean Shelter Guide: COVID-19 Considerations can be accessed [here](#).



Pillar 8: Operational support and logistics

CARICOM pooled procurement mechanism

Heads of Government have recognized the need to pool procurement of medical devices and supplies. PAHO collaborated with CARICOM and CDEMA in the development of a procurement protocol for the consolidated purchase of prioritized medical devices and supplies. Through this protocol, PAHO will support CARICOM and other countries with the procurement of 11 prioritized items through the Strategic Fund, Reimbursable Procurement, and by facilitating access to WHO procurement mechanisms, including the WHO COVID-19 Supply Portal. The procurement protocol presented by PAHO was approved at the 10th Special Emergency Meeting of Heads of Government on 5 May, 2020.

Pillar 9: Maintaining essential health services and systems

Human Resources for Health (HRH) and the COVID-19 response

PAHO analysed HRH interventions and policy development in support of COVID-19 response in the region. It included measures taken by countries on staffing and scaling, the legal framework and first level health care workers and COVID19. The analysis also included the collection of available data on health care workers affected by COVID-19. More on the findings of this study in the next issue.

Assessment of health care worker risk exposure

The office trained and supported Grenada in applying the **WHO tool for the assessment of risk of exposure for health workers in health care facilities and the incorporation of Cuban nurses.**

Support was also provided to Belize with a review of its guidelines of risk assessment and management of exposure of health care workers in the context of COVID-19.



Continuation of HIV/STI & TB Prevention and Treatment Services

The implementation of evidence-based and high impact HIV/STI prevention interventions targeting key populations continues is a challenge in the region.

However, following effective advocacy by PAHO with regional partners, efforts are under way to roll-out HIV self-testing in five member states (Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Guyana & Trinidad and Tobago). The protocol for the roll-out of HIV self testing was developed as PAHO continues to provide technical guidance to PANCAP and Caribbean MedLab Foundation for implementation.



Climate Change and COVID-19

Actions to address COVID-19 have been integrated into the activities of the European Union-funded project “Strengthening Climate Resilient Health Systems in the Caribbean”. The project will support COVID-19 prevention and control efforts in the following ways:



- Support national level efforts to adapt systems in order to better address future threats
- Strengthen national health early warning surveillance systems and training
- Assessment and training of the environmental health workforce in their response to COVID-19
- Pilot food safety and inspection programs that consider both the impacts from climate change and COVID-19
- Train multisectoral and interdisciplinary group from health, environment, climate, agriculture and other sectors in prevention and control of COVID-19
- Promote youth engagement in COVID-19 prevention activities; and
- Develop health communication strategies to help the Caribbean public better understand and prevent COVID-19

Research, Innovation, and Development

Solidarity Clinical Trial: PAHO/WHO has coordinated with UWI to facilitate the participation of Caribbean countries in the Solidarity Clinical Trial for COVID-19 treatments. This will be managed through UWI's campuses and experts in Bahamas, Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago.



The Office of Caribbean Subregional Cooperation

The PAHO Subregional Program Coordination Office is PAHO/WHO's main interlocutor with CARICOM and its regional institutions. The office provides technical cooperation to support the implementation of Caribbean cooperation in health.