

# COVID-19

PAHO/WHO RESPONSE. AUGUST 2022. REPORT N.81



## SITUATION NUMBERS IN THE AMERICAS

175,701,207

TOTAL REPORTED CASES

2,819,798

TOTAL REPORTED DEATHS

1,970,091,914

VACCINE DOSES ADMINISTERED

12.7% DECREASE FROM PREVIOUS WEEK

9.6% DECREASE FROM PREVIOUS WEEK

29.3% OF CASES 43.5% OF DEATHS WORLDWIDE

69.4% OF THE POPULATION FULLY VACCINATED IN LATIN AMERICAN AND THE CARIBBEAN\*

AS OF 31 AUGUST 2022.

\*VACCINATION DATA AS OF 2 SEPTEMBER 2022.

## IN THE NEWS

Results of the first phase of the communications campaign developed by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) to address vaccine hesitancy in Eastern Caribbean Countries (ECC) were considered a success. The campaign ran from October 2021 to June 2022 and addressed four key challenges: low COVID-19 vaccination uptake; false COVID-19 information; the achievement of 70% vaccination coverage by June 2022; and the appearance of new variants of concern. PAHO and ITU worked on the campaign with telecommunications provider Trend Media/Digicel. The campaign leveraged the public-private partnership model pioneered by WHO and ITU. PAHO-curated awareness-raising and behavior change information was packaged in engaging multimedia format (infographics, posters, videos, etc.) and posted online. People received SMS messages with brief preventive health advice along with links to multimedia materials accessible without data-traffic costs. Phase 1 initially ran from October 2021 to January 2022 and targeted Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, and St. Lucia. The project was extended to June 2022, and then included Dominica and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Findings show that one in four people read some of the 5 million messages forwarded and opened the links. Additionally, approximately 81% of mobile users who received the messages described the content as useful, interesting, or relevant. Importantly, at least 5% of respondents reported that the communications campaign helped them decide to get vaccinated, while almost 14% said the information helped them adjust their behavior. PAHO and ITU are currently in discussions about Phase 2 of the project, which is to be implemented in other Caribbean countries.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Geo-Hub COVID-19 Information System for the Region of the Americas

PAHO's COVID-19 Vaccination in the Americas Dashboard

PAHO's technical and epidemiological reports, guidance, and recommendations

PAHO thanks our generous donors who have been helping us save lives and reduce the impact of COVID-19 in the Region.

*Thank You!*  
[paho.org/donate](https://paho.org/donate)

Read global operational situation reports



World Health Organization

READ PAHO'S COVID-19 OPERATIONAL SITUATION REPORTS [HERE](#).

READ [PAHO'S MID-YEAR SUMMARY REPORT ON RESPONSE TO COVID-19 IN 2022](#).



## STORIES FROM THE FIELD

# STRENGTHENING COLD CHAIN OPERATIONS: ON A MISSION TO TAKE VACCINES TO THE FARTHEST CORNERS OF THE REGION

*Protecting the vaccines using the appropriate cold chain equipment can be a perilous matter in isolated rural communities. A vaccine kept above or below the recommended temperature may lose some of its efficacy, leaving the population at risk of vaccine-preventable diseases (VPD).*

In several villages of Panama's central Veraguas province and the indigenous territory of Ngäbe Buglé, hundreds of miles away from the country's urban settlements, the electricity is often out, if not completely unavailable. Until recently, communities along the Pacific and Caribbean coasts had to rely on vaccine refrigerators powered by gas.

**"This was always risky. If there was no timely supply [of gas], then health workers had to rush out from the posts to bring the vaccines to the nearest health center to protect them,"** recalled Argelis Espinosa, head of the Expanded Program of Immunizations in Veraguas. She has led the COVID-19 vaccine deployment in 45 health posts that serve 148,000 people in Veraguas, some in places that can only be reached by plane or boat.

Likewise, in some locations the existing cold chain equipment was not adequate for the massive COVID-19 vaccine rollout of 2021. Workers at other posts in the Caribbean basin had to take turns and wait for days to use coolers to take vaccines to their communities, which are either nestled in the mountains or tucked away on beaches that are inaccessible by road.

As part of an effort led by the Government of Panama and PAHO, these communities received cold boxes and smaller vaccine carriers, ensuring safe transportation as well as solar-powered refrigerators and temperature-monitoring devices that keep vaccines safe in areas where electricity supply is intermittent. Through collaboration with partners, over 445 refrigerators and freezers, seven walk-in cold rooms, 2,222 temperature-monitoring devices and over 9,000 pieces of equipment, including cold boxes and small carriers, have been provided to 15 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In coming months, cold chain equipment newly donated by international partners through PAHO will benefit populations in 26 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

[Read the full story here.](#)

# VACCINATION, PUBLIC HEALTH INTERVENTIONS, AND ENGAGED COMMUNITIES

## BY THE NUMBERS

- 710,694,806 people have been fully vaccinated in 51 countries and territories, representing 69.4% of the population in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- More than 150,586,230 doses were delivered to 33 countries in the Americas through PAHO's Revolving Fund and COVAX.
- 17 countries/territories achieved the WHO target of 70% vaccination by the end of June 2022.
- 10 countries/territories have not reached the 40% coverage target set by WHO for December 2021.

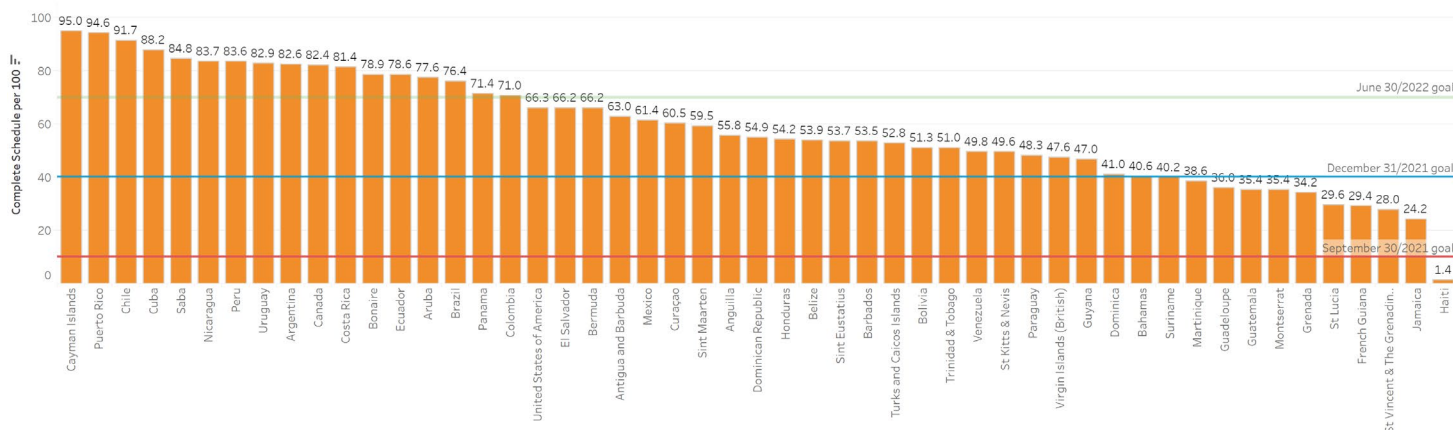
as of 2 September 2022.



## FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT

- [PAHO's COVID-19 Vaccination in the Americas dashboard.](#)
- [Arrival of COVID-19 vaccines to the Americas through COVAX.](#)
- [Pharmacovigilance of COVID-19 vaccines.](#)

Percentage of fully vaccinated people in countries of the Americas, epidemiological week 28 of 2022.



## KEY TOOLS AND RESOURCES

COVID-19 Communication Materials

COVID-19 Latest News

PAHO's Weekly Press Briefings on COVID-19

Courses and Webinars on COVID-19 on the Virtual Campus for Public Health



## SELECTED HIGHLIGHTS

On 8 August 2022, PAHO launched the communication material “Why should we get a COVID-19 vaccine?”, which includes three short videos to be used on social media. In an effort to increase vaccine uptake in the Region of the Americas, the material underscores the importance of getting vaccinated against COVID-19 to protect individual and community health and well-being. The videos can be [downloaded](#) from PAHO’s website.

In **Belize** during the reporting period, PAHO delivered 50 COVID-19 vaccine banners, 10 loudspeakers, and 1,800 COVID-19 vaccine posters to the Ministry of Health and Wellness (MoHW) to strengthen its COVID-19 vaccination campaign.

In **Chile** from 19 to 22 August 2022, PAHO participated in visits to points of entry with the Ministry of Health team dedicated to International Health Regulations (IHR). The visits aimed to verify basic IHR capacities at points of entry in the regions of Antofagasta and Atacama in the context of COVID-19.

In **Costa Rica** on 5 August 2022, PAHO participated in a session of traditional knowledge dialogues carried out in the indigenous territory of Quitirrisí to follow up on activities for COVID-19 prevention within the community. PAHO also participated in a working session with the health committee of Quitirrisí to coordinate the development of an indigenous census in the region in support of the local district council and council of elder persons. On 8 August 2022, another traditional knowledge dialogue session took place in the region of Talamanca. After the session, PAHO participated in the identification of actions that will tackle COVID-related problems and improve access to health services for the local population. Together with local association representatives, PAHO supported the creation of key messages with information on COVID-19 to be translated into the language spoken by the Quitirrisí community.

During the reporting period, PAHO also carried out a number of activities intended to increase vaccination uptake in **Costa Rica**. On 1 August 2022, PAHO participated in a conversation with women from the indigenous territory of La Casona. The aim was to incorporate a transversal, contextual, and gendered approach to activities promoting COVID-19 vaccination among pregnant women. From 3 to 11 August 2022, PAHO conducted activities to disseminate information about COVID-19 vaccination among adolescent mothers, children, the LGBTI population, indigenous peoples, people living with HIV and staff providing assistance to them. On 7 and 9 August 2022, PAHO participated in an open event in the area of Heredia and in an intercultural meeting of indigenous populations, providing a booth where visitors could find information about COVID-19 vaccines.



Figures 1, 2 and 3. PAHO engages in activities and public events to disseminate information on COVID-19 vaccines in Costa Rica. Credit: PAHO.



Additionally in **Costa Rica**, PAHO and the Ministry of Health developed [videos](#) to promote vaccination against COVID-19 in social media. UNICEF is participating in dissemination of the material. The videos are already being published on PAHO and the Ministry of Health’s social network pages.

In **Haiti** from 10 to 13 August 2022, PAHO provided technical and financial support to train 90 community health workers and 10 auxiliary nurses in interpersonal communication in preparation for their participation in the vaccination campaign in the Centre department. Health workers from the department also received training on data collection and reporting related to the vaccination campaign. Additionally, the Organization supported visits to 10 churches to share vaccination messages.

In **Suriname** on 8 August 2022, **PAHO donated equipment to the Regional Health Department (RGD)** as part of efforts to strengthen maintenance of the country's cold chain capacity. The donation to the RGD consisted of 15 refrigerators that will be placed at 15 of the 55 RGD Clinics and used for the safe storage of COVID-19 and other vaccines. The equipment will help improve Suriname's disease prevention capacity, especially in regions outside the capital and in underserved communities.



Figure 4. PAHO delivers 15 refrigerators to the Regional Health Department of Suriname. Credit: PAHO.

## SURVEILLANCE, LABORATORIES, AND PUBLIC HEALTH INTELLIGENCE

### BY THE NUMBERS

- 33 laboratories from 30 countries participate in the **COVID-19 Genomic Surveillance Regional Network (COVIGEN)**. Reference sequencing laboratories operate in **Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Panama, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United States of America**.
- More than **4,783,352** complete genomic sequences from the Americas have been shared globally through publicly accessible databases since the beginning of the pandemic.
- Since the onset of the pandemic through **31 August 2022**, PAHO has delivered:
  - **22.83 million** COVID-19 PCR Tests.
  - **22.21 million** Rapid Antigen Diagnostic Testes (Ag-RDTs).
  - **706,700** sample collection kits.
  - **863,538** Genomic Surveillance Tests.
  - **119** primers to test for variants.

as of 31 August 2022.

## KEY TOOLS AND RESOURCES

COVID-19 Weekly Updates for the Region of the Americas

Contact Tracing Knowledge Hub

[Go.Data app](#) to support case investigation and contact tracing

Latin America and the Caribbean Dashboard of Seroprevalence Studies

## SELECTED HIGHLIGHTS



Figure 5: PAHO holds 26<sup>th</sup> edition of the Viral Evolution and Molecular Epidemiology (VEME) course in Panama. Credit: PAHO.

From 21 to 26 August 2022, PAHO received representatives from 17 public health laboratories in the Americas for the 26th **Viral Evolution and Molecular Epidemiology (VEME) course in Panama**. The training, which aims to strengthen genomic surveillance in the Americas, was organized in collaboration with the Gorgas Memorial Institute for Health Studies in Panama and the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (FIOCRUZ) in Brazil. More than 120 people from around the world participated in the event, which originated more than 25 years ago at the University of Leuven, Belgium. Around 50 experts in bioinformatics from renowned scientific institutions from 15

countries delivered the training to participants from the Americas, who received PAHO's financial support to attend the course. The course consisted of theoretical and practical sessions divided into four modules, ranging from the generation of data from genomic sequencing to more complex analysis of these sequences. For the first time, VEME also included a module aimed at managers and decision-makers.

In **Brazil** during the month of August, a team was deployed to the municipality of Rio de Janeiro in Rio de Janeiro state to strengthen technical cooperation between PAHO and the Municipal Health Secretariat. The mission aimed to expand capacity for local surveillance, preparedness, and response to public health events, public health emergencies, and disasters, based on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic.

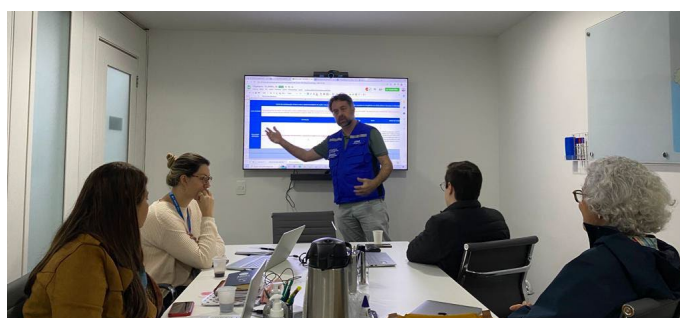


Figure 6: Technical cooperation meeting with the Municipal Health Secretariat of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Credit: PAHO.

PAHO has also been facilitating procurement and donation of supplies to laboratories in **Brazil** to strengthen the National Genetic Sequencing Network for Health Surveillance (RNSG), which includes Central Laboratories of Public Health (LACENs), Border Laboratories of Public Health (LAFRONs), and the General Coordination of Public Health Laboratories of the Ministry of Health (CGLAB). Additionally, PAHO has provided financial and technical support to expand the country's genomic surveillance by enabling the hiring of 27 bioinformatics professionals (one professional per state) to join the LACEN network.

On 11 August 2022, PAHO met with the Health Surveillance Secretariat of Brazil's Roraima state to align priority actions related to Severe Acute Respiratory Infections (SARI), including COVID-19, post-COVID-19 rehabilitation, arboviruses, monkeypox, and other potential public health emergencies, with a focus on vulnerable populations. Following the meeting, from 24 to 26 August, a PAHO team was deployed to



Roraima to assess the situation of health system delivery in coping with the aforementioned conditions simultaneously. On 19 August, PAHO participated in a meeting with the Influenza Working Group of the Ministry of Health of **Brazil** to review the final document on the use of nirmatrelvir/ritonavir in treating COVID-19.



## SAFE AND SCALABLE CLINICAL CARE, AND RESILIENT HEALTH SYSTEMS

### BY THE NUMBERS

- **Compilation** of evidence on **232** potential therapeutics based on **723** randomized controlled trials and observational studies. Last updated on 28 July 2022.
- Since the beginning of the pandemic, a total of **300** Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs), and **385** Alternative Medical Care Sites (AMCS) have added **50,552** inpatient hospital beds and **2,285** critical care beds throughout the Americas.

as of 31 August 2022.

### KEY TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Ongoing Living Update of Potential COVID-19 Therapeutics.

PAHO's COVID-19 EMT Response information hub.

### SELECTED HIGHLIGHTS

On 19 August 2022, PAHO – with the support of the national regulatory authorities (NRAs) of the Region of the Americas – [adapted the World Health Organization \(WHO\) protocol for safety surveillance of molnupiravir](#) through cohort event monitoring. Molnupiravir is an oral medication for mild and moderate COVID-19 in adults at risk of hospitalization and progression to severe illness. It is the first oral medicine on the market for the treatment of non-severe COVID-19. The safety surveillance protocol of molnupiravir in the Americas is an adaptation of a WHO proposal. It was developed within the framework of the activities of the network of pharmacovigilance focal points and the NRA group for vaccine safety, based on the regional plan for the introduction of COVID-19 vaccines. Participating NRAs contributed to the proposed adaptations. The primary objective of the surveillance study is to characterize and estimate the incidence of adverse events of special interest (AESI), including serious adverse events (e.g., hospitalizations) among patients who receive the medicine. This initiative is part of the project "Working together to fight antimicrobial resistance," implemented with support from other international partners.

In **Bolivia** during the month of August – as part of a project to strengthen COVID-19 response capacity in health facilities and vulnerable indigenous communities in the cities of Cabezas, Camirí, Gutierrez and Charagua – PAHO delivered medical supplies to 16 priority health facilities of the Cordillera health network. The delivery included oxygen pipes, oxygen concentrators, oximeters, thermometers, and biosafety supplies for health care workers.



Figures 7 and 8. Supplies delivered to the hospital of Camirí and to authorities in Charagua. Credit: PAHO.

In **Bolivia** during the reporting period, PAHO provided technical support for the General Directorate for Traditional Medicine and for representatives from Departmental Units of Traditional Medicine and from the Unified Health System of the Ministry of Health and Sports. The collaboration aims to support the inclusion of traditional medical care interventions in the Unified Health System, including alternative treatment for SARS-CoV-2.

In **Brazil** during the reporting period, PAHO carried out health care capacity-building sessions and activities to raise health care workers' awareness of post-COVID-19 conditions in the city of Parintins, state of Amazonas. Activities included training 100 community health agents. As a result of previous interventions in the North region of the country, the Post-COVID Healthcare Unit of Santarém, state of Pará, established with support from PAHO, has recorded more than 560 visits from January to July 2022.



Figures 9 and 10. Supplies delivered to the hospital of Camirí and to authorities in Charagua. Credit: PAHO.

PAHO has also supported the production of infection prevention and control (IPC) instructional materials in **Brazil** (152,100 leaflets and 274 posters). The material will be distributed to 21 Municipal Health Secretariats in the states of Amapá and Pará.



In **Costa Rica** from 3 to 9 August 2022, PAHO participated in a project that aims to create a space for children to use artwork to express what they learned from educational activities on health promotion and COVID-19 prevention. The activities were carried out in childcare and development centers and have benefited approximately 100 boys and girls and their families.



Figure 11. Children in Costa Rica engage in health promotion and education activities. Credit: PAHO.

## RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, AND EQUITABLE ACCESS TO COUNTERMEASURES AND ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES

### BY THE NUMBERS

- 439 COVID-19-related reports are available in the [Regional Database of Health Technology Assessment Reports of the Americas \(BRISA\)](#).
- [PAHO's Strategic Fund](#) has procured more than \$300 million worth of COVID-19 diagnostic tests (PCR and rapid antigen tests), PPE, and medicines for critical care. Purchases have already benefited more than 40 million people throughout the Americas.
- Since the onset of the pandemic, PAHO has delivered 241 shipments of supplies to 36 countries and territories in the Americas, including:
  - 9 million gloves.
  - 49.7 million surgical and respirator masks.
  - 3.7 million face shields.
  - 3.3 million gowns.

as of 31 August 2022.

### KEY TOOLS AND RESOURCES

COVID-19 guidance and the latest research in the Americas.

Regional Platform on Access and Innovation for Health Technologies (PRAIS).

### SELECTED HIGHLIGHTS

On 29 August 2022, PAHO held the webinar [“MEURI framework: How to ensure that during the emergency, unproven interventions are used ethically outside of research.”](#) The event presented the Monitored

Emergency use of UnRegistered Interventions (MEURI), which consists of ethical criteria for research during emergencies, and knowledge built upon the experience with the COVID-19 pandemic.

On 15 August 2022, PAHO published the report “[Impact of COVID-19 on human resources for health and policy response: the case of Belize, Grenada, and Jamaica.](#)” This report informs and analyzes the impact of COVID-19 on health workers' occupational health and safety concerns, working conditions, as well as policy responses to address these issues and increase human resources for health (HRH) surge capacity in Belize, Grenada, and Jamaica. Understanding strategies used by countries, such as recruitment processes, type of redeployment, and incentives, will provide evidence on ways to address health worker shortages during disease outbreaks and, therefore, reduce implementation gaps. The report also describes elements related to HRH and COVID-19 vaccination in selected countries and shares experiences from Belize, Grenada, and Jamaica (members of CARICOM), which represent different areas of the Caribbean. The target audience includes policymakers, academics, and researchers on addressing health worker issues during health emergencies.

In **Belize**, PAHO in collaboration with international partners and donors, [donated medical equipment to strengthen health services capacities](#) in the country. The medical equipment included two medical waste management autoclaves, two biomedical waste transport trolleys, 20 patient monitors, 10 delivery beds, 46 electric patient beds, 15 incubators, 7 ECG machines, 12 transfer stretchers with emergency carts and 10 suction machines. The donations are part of a multisectoral collaboration initiative that aims to strengthen the response capacity of the health system to COVID-19, improve accessibility of local health care services in support of COVID-19 recovery, and increase awareness of prevention, response, and recovery from COVID-19 among vulnerable urban and rural populations in Belize.



Figure 12. PAHO delivers donation of medical equipment in Belize. Credit: PAHO.

In **Costa Rica** on 9 and 10 August 2022, PAHO donated medical supplies to several national institutions for distribution to organizations that work with the LGBTI population. This initiative is part of PAHO’s efforts to ensure equitable access to health supplies for LGBTI persons and enhance its overall strategy to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic. Donations included surgical masks, soap, and alcohol gel.

# PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE COORDINATION

## BY THE NUMBERS

- 335 technical guidelines and recommendations related to COVID-19 were developed or adapted from WHO.
- More than 418 virtual or in-person regional and country trainings were delivered at regional and country levels.

as of 31 August 2022.

## KEY TOOLS AND RESOURCES

COVID-19 Partners Platform

Response Strategy and Donor Appeal

COVID-19 Response Fund

From 16 to 19 August 2022, PAHO held a [regional workshop on preparedness and response to events with pandemic and epidemic potential](#) in Buenos Aires, Argentina. With the aim of helping countries in Latin America and the Caribbean to develop or update their operational plans to face future pandemics, the workshop will take into account the lessons learned from COVID-19. A preparedness and response plan for events with epidemic and pandemic potential is one of the core capacities required by the IHR, a legally binding international convention adopted by WHO Member States to prevent and respond to public health threats that can cross borders and affect populations around the world. PAHO expects to hold similar workshops with other countries in the region during 2022. The outputs of this and other workshops will integrate the vision of the Americas into global pandemic preparedness and response documents and guidelines.



Figure 13. Dr. Carissa Etienne, PAHO Director and other health authorities participate in event for pandemic preparedness in Argentina. Credit: PAHO.

In **Bolivia** from 16 to 19 August 2022, PAHO and international partners conducted a mission to monitor the progress of a PAHO project in the Chaco region. Representatives from the organizations



Figures 14 and 15. PAHO team visits situation room and water systems that are part of interventions of the project in the Chaco region, in Bolivia. Credit: PAHO.



responsible for implementing the project visited offices of local authorities, health facilities, and indigenous communities targeted by the initiative. In the end, experts evaluated the progress of activities and made recommendations to ensure accomplishment of the project's objectives.

With municipal health authorities, PAHO participated in development of health protocols supporting the Contingency Plan of the Municipality of San Ignacio Velasco, **Bolivia**. On 19 August 2022, the Plan was validated after a simulation exercise conducted with health authorities and government officials from other departments, such as the Environment Secretariat, firefighters, the military, among others. PAHO participated in the exercise, which tested the municipality's institutional response capacities and readiness of staff.

In **Costa Rica**, PAHO visited a migrants' station in the area of Corredores, in the country's southern region. These stations aim to assist migrants or persons in transit through the country. PAHO's visit aimed to follow care provided to families isolated due to COVID-19 and other health conditions. PAHO donated recreational material to children in isolation and provided guidance to the cleaning staff on the management of infectious waste.



Figure 16. Team of evaluators and observers that participated in the simulation exercise in Bolivia. Credit: PAHO.



Figure 17. PAHO team visits facility dedicated to assist migrant populations in Costa Rica. Credit: PAHO.