



ANNUAL REPORT 2021

JAMAICA, BERMUDA, AND CAYMAN ISLANDS

Responding to COVID-19
and Preparing for the Future

PAHO



Pan American
Health
Organization



World Health
Organization
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE
AMERICAS



Annual Report 2021. Jamaica, Bermuda, and Cayman Islands: Responding to COVID-19 and Preparing for the Future
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The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) was founded in 1902 and is recognized as the independent specialized health agency of the inter-American system, under the Charter of the Organization of American States. In 1949, PAHO agreed to serve as the Regional Office for the Americas of the World Health Organization (WHO), a specialized agency of the United Nations system. Acting in its capacity as WHO's Regional Office, PAHO participates actively in the United Nations Country Team, collaborating with other agencies, the funds and programmes of the United Nations system, and with the United Nations Resident Coordinator to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals at country level. For 120 years, PAHO has developed recognized competence and expertise, providing technical cooperation to its Member States to fight communicable and noncommunicable diseases and their causes, to strengthen health systems, and to respond to emergencies and disasters throughout the Region of the Americas.

Given PAHO's dual legal status and the difficulty of disaggregating PAHO from WHO activities, this Annual Report reflects both PAHO and WHO activities in the Americas as related to technical cooperation in 2021. Approximately 80% of PAHO's technical cooperation in health in the Region of the Americas is funded by PAHO's own quota and voluntary contributions, as an inter-American organization. The remaining 20% of PAHO's integrated biennial budget includes WHO-funded activities. Further detailed financial information for this Annual Report can be found in the Financial Summary section.



Terecia Grange, mother of two, brought her grandson to the Kitson Town Health Centre to get his vaccinations, administered by nurse Christine Smart-Guy.

Mission

To lead strategic collaborative efforts among Member States and other partners to promote equity in health, combat disease, improve the quality of, and lengthen the lives of the peoples of the Americas.

Vision

To be the major catalyst for ensuring that all the peoples of the Americas enjoy optimal health and contribute to the well-being of their families and communities.



MINISTRY OF
HEALTH &
WELLNESS

COVID-19 Vaccine

AstraZeneca

What you need to know



VALUES

It is safe

It is protective

You need two doses to be fully vaccinated

Most side effects are minor and temporary



EQUITY

Striving for fairness and justice by eliminating differences that are unnecessary and avoidable.



EXCELLENCE

Achieving the highest quality in what we do.



SOLIDARITY

Promoting shared interests, responsibilities and enabling collective efforts to achieve common goals.



RESPECT

Embracing the dignity and diversity of individuals, groups, and countries.



INTEGRITY

Assuring transparent, ethical, and accountable performance.

Oswald Byfield in good spirits after receiving the second dose of his Astra Zeneca vaccine at the Kitson Town Health Centre.

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



In 2021, COVID-19 remained the greatest public health challenge of modern history. The Region of the Americas was hardest hit and, as new variants of the virus emerged, it became clear that the pandemic was not yet over. However, new vaccines heralded its ending and the advent of a new normal at work, at school, and in everyday social interactions.

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) strengthened its technical cooperation to support Member States in vaccinating populations against COVID-19. However, vaccine hesitancy and misinformation sometimes hampered their valiant efforts. PAHO must continue to assist countries in implementing strategies to overcome such obstacles for the COVID-19 vaccination program and routine childhood and other immunization programs.

COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on all countries. Given the attention focused on the pandemic response, we risk losing gains already made in other areas of public health and face a significant worsening in the socioeconomic determinants of health. The COVID-19 experience has underscored the need to continue to advocate for resilient health systems; strengthen the first level of care using a primary health care approach; promote health in all policies; and revitalize essential public health functions.

Therefore, in 2021 we focused more on those areas of health neglected earlier in the pandemic. These 2021 annual reports chronicle the work in countries and subregions as we prepare for the post-pandemic era.

I sincerely thank our Member States, partners, and donors for working with us to address the challenges of COVID-19. We need to continue to collaborate closely in the complex task of ending the pandemic; tackling the inequities and inequalities in health that plague our Region; maintaining health high on the political agenda of all Member States; and championing health equity as the cornerstone for sustainable development to ensure that we leave no one behind.

Dr. Carissa F. Etienne

Director of the Pan American Health Organization

MESSAGE FROM THE REPRESENTATIVE



As an unprecedented public health emergency, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to affect how people and governments view health priorities, while maintaining and, when necessary, adapting to the ongoing pandemic response. Therefore, our work during 2021 at the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) Jamaica Country Office centred on supporting the country's emergency response, ensuring timely access to evolving evidence and strategies pertaining to COVID-19, while providing a parallel technical cooperation program to re-energize efforts to strengthen health systems.

Although Jamaica, Bermuda, and Cayman Islands received COVID-19 vaccines from different sources in 2021, removing the hurdle of access to vaccines revealed new challenges related to vaccine hesitancy. PAHO assisted the broad COVID-19 response to guarantee vaccine procurement and delivery, resources needed for diagnostics, protective equipment, and isolation and quarantine facilities.

The work to reform health systems was strengthened by a renewed commitment from the Government of Jamaica with the signing of a technical cooperation agreement to provide a national voluntary contribution to collaborate with PAHO. Furthermore, the Jamaica Country Office continued to work with external partners to enhance the resilience of health sector facilities to ensure continuity of service delivery before, during, and after hazards through the Smart Hospitals initiative.

The Jamaica Country Office's ability to achieve strategic and tactical collaboration was directly linked to the tremendous work of the team, with support from colleagues in the subregional office and the regional office team. This annual report from the PAHO Jamaica Country Office outlines contributions, achievements, challenges, and projections for Jamaica, including the territories of Cayman Islands and Bermuda, in 2021.

Mr. Ian Stein

PAHO Representative in Jamaica, Bermuda, and the Cayman Islands



Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, Minister of Health and Wellness (centre), discusses a patient monitor that will be used to assess the needs of a patient's changing condition. Looking on are (left to right) Ian Stein, PAHO Representative in Jamaica, Bermuda, and Cayman Islands; and Dr. Marion Bullock DuCasse, Focal Point, Health Emergencies.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The COVID-19 response was enhanced in 2021 when Jamaica, benefiting from technical cooperation with and guidance from the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), guaranteed vaccine procurement and delivery for its population, as well as other resources needed for diagnostics, protective equipment, isolation and quarantine facilities, and the development of a concept note on essential health research for the COVID-19 response.
- PAHO supported Jamaica, Bermuda, and the Cayman Islands on their path toward disaster risk reduction as well as the ongoing implementation of [Phase II of the Smart Health Care Facilities in the Caribbean Project](#). This project, which aims to enhance the resilience of health facilities to ensure continuity of service delivery before, during, and after hazards such as hurricanes, has led to the upgrade of nine facilities so far.
- Working toward the upcoming restructuring of the Jamaican Ministry of Health and Wellness (MOHW) and Regional Health Authorities (RHAs) and health care reform in Jamaica, the country signed a technical cooperation agreement with PAHO to provide a national voluntary contribution, with projects developed to strengthen public financial management and results-based management, as well as a strategic plan for health information systems and a concept note for policy on health research.
- PAHO supported Jamaica's efforts as the COVID-19 pandemic impact underscored the need to include mental health in emergency and disaster management, as well as activities that contributed to achieving milestones in tobacco control and road safety. Furthermore, PAHO assisted with initiatives to tackle the high prevalence of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) in the population and promote better nutrition, such as the [National Infant and Young Child Feeding Policy and Strategic Plan](#) and front-of-package labelling.
- This year, PAHO also focused on a healthy life course approach by supporting routine immunization in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic impact on supply and delivery. Moreover, the PAHO Country Office, in collaboration with the University of the West Indies (UWI) Open Campus, developed an online course for adolescent health and biweekly articles in the local media, as well as videos in keeping with the launch of the [Decade of Healthy Ageing](#).

PAHO TECHNICAL COOPERATION



HEALTH EMERGENCIES



(Left to right) Dr. Varough Deyde, Director, Caribbean Regional Office, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); John McIntyre, Chargé d’Affaires, Embassy of the United States of America in Jamaica; and Ian Stein, PAHO Representative in Jamaica, Bermuda, and Cayman Islands, hand the keys to a new 16-seater minibus to the Hon. Juliet Cuthbert Flynn, State Minister in the Ministry of Health and Wellness, at the handover ceremony.

In 2021, with PAHO’s assistance, Jamaica continued to adapt and ensure an appropriate response to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as future health emergencies, including

vaccine procurement and delivery, updated health emergency and disaster risk management, and enhancing health centres.

The COVID-19 pandemic and response

Jamaica, Bermuda, and Cayman Islands received their first doses of the COVID-19 vaccine in the first quarter of 2021 through Public Health England, the COVAX Facility, the African Medical Supply Platform, and a number of governments. Jamaica received additional doses via sharing mechanisms from Canada, Germany, and Spain. However, removing the hurdle of access to COVID-19 vaccines revealed new challenges related to vaccine hesitancy.

Thus, all pillars of the COVID-19 response were enhanced in 2021 with technical cooperation and guidance through PAHO's permanent representation on the MOHW's coordination mechanisms for COVID-19 response. Strong support was provided by the PAHO Country Office to national authorities on several areas, including navigating the vaccine procurement and delivery systems with the COVAX Facility, manufacturers, and governments; communication campaigns promoting the COVID-19 vaccine; procurement of surveillance, response, and life-saving medical and diagnostic equipment, and supplies for isolation and quarantine facilities, including at alternative medical care sites. To this end, the team engaged governments, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), and donor groups for the successful implementation of five COVID-19 response projects within 2021, valued at over US\$ 1.3 million, with approximately US\$ 0.87 million implemented in 2021.

Five additional COVID-19 response projects were also implemented in 2021 that were still active at the end of the year, with a total value of approximately US\$ 4.246 million. In addition, the PAHO Country Office provided technical assistance and leading-edge information to the private and public health sector, partners, and stakeholders for the COVID-19 pandemic response. The vaccination campaign in 2021 resulted in 18.7%, 62.8%, and 90.2% of people fully vaccinated in Jamaica, Bermuda, and Cayman Islands, respectively, by 25 December 2021.

Lastly, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and PAHO partnered to bolster Jamaica's pandemic response by delivering emergency response equipment and supplies to the MOHW in October 2021, as part of a US\$ 1 million grant. The MOHW received a 16-seater minibus, sampling and laboratory supplies including 80 GeneXpert kits to test SARS-CoV-2, testing materials and nitrile gloves, and communication equipment such as satellite phones, radios, cellular phones, and laptops.

International Health Regulations (IHR)

Jamaica improved its capacities above the average for the Caribbean in 2021 and was one of nine countries in the Region of the Americas that has consistently submitted the [IHR State Party Self-Assessment Annual Reporting \(SPAR\)](#) tool to the World Health Assembly since 2011,

when WHO systematized management of these data within the legally binding [IHR\(2005\)](#). This was achieved by the implementation of key recommendations developed following IHR application, such as an assessment tool for core capacity requirements at designated airports, ports, and ground crossings. The PAHO Country Office continued to deliver technical guidance and support for enhanced IHR core capacities with multidisciplinary and multisectoral participation in areas such as chemical and radiation event planning, updated legislation and border health security, with upgraded infrastructure at points of entry in the context of COVID-19. Moreover, PAHO assisted with the introduction and ongoing revision of travel measures, surveillance, and response.

Disaster risk reduction

Jamaica updated and validated its Health Strategic Risk Profile through capacity building with training of the MOHW team in the utilization of the [WHO Strategic Tool for Assessing Risk \(STAR\)](#). The collaboration with the MOHW included utilization of recommendations on hazard vulnerability for 15 facilities developed with support from the [Pilot Program for Climate Resilience \(PPCR\)](#) within the Climate Investment Fund administered by the World Bank to implement Investment Project 1, [Improving Climate Data and Information Management](#)

[Project \(ICDIMP\)](#). Jamaica, Bermuda, and Cayman Islands also received technical support for updated health emergency and disaster risk management policies, programs, and plans, using recommendations from the Annual Monitoring Questionnaire for the [Plan of Action for Disaster Risk Reduction](#).

Smart Health Care Facilities in the Caribbean Project – Jamaica

Arising from the continued partnership with the United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and PAHO, Jamaica continued its implementation of [Phase II of the Smart Health Care Facilities in the Caribbean Project](#). This work enhanced the resilience of nine health facilities to ensure continuity of service delivery before, during, and after hazards such as hurricanes. One of the upgraded health centres achieved the planned Smart “gold” standard for resilience and sustainability. With a value for Jamaica of US\$ 11 million, the project is set to conclude in December 2022 with three more facilities to be upgraded, totalling 12 retrofitted health centres, including four upgraded to the “gold” standard and two benefiting from provision of Smart designs only.



HEALTH EMERGENCIES

STORIES FROM THE FIELD

Jamaican grandmother living with HIV supports women's mental health during COVID-19

Ivorine is a 55-year-old Jamaican mother of three, and grandmother to one, and she has been living with HIV for 29 years. She is a long-standing advocate for women living with HIV and has become a symbol of resilience in her community during the COVID-19 pandemic – a time of increased need for specialized support as more HIV-positive women have lost their income, felt isolated, or need motivation to continue taking their antiretroviral treatment.

“Adjusting to life with a positive status is extremely difficult, and with the pandemic came the heightened fear of contracting COVID-19 because of a compromised immune system, and the added anxiety of discrimination if one becomes infected and needs medical care,” explained Ivorine. Spurred into action, she worked with the Jamaica Community of Positive Women (JCW+), to transition their services to a virtual environment, helping to limit the number of women visiting the office.

PAHO supports HIV/AIDS programs in Jamaica and works with the MOHW to eliminate mother-to-child transmission and supplies personal protective equipment (PPE) to

various civil society organizations, including JCW+. In addition to distributing care packages, JCW+ taught safe use of sanitization chemicals for women living with HIV.

Ivorine's most important work remains empowering HIV-positive women to embrace life and reassuring them that COVID-19 is not a death sentence. “For many [HIV] positive women, the onset of the pandemic negatively impacted their mental health and it seemed like everything went wrong,” stated Ivorine. “... When I realized my peers were in a more difficult position than I was – many faced domestic abuse, lacked emotional support of family and friends – it spurred me to look beyond my personal fears and take action to help.” Ivorine also promotes COVID-19 vaccination. “By telling other positive women about my experience, it gives them the confidence to take the vaccine too.”

A young woman that Ivorine helped through JCW+ described her as “amazing.” She told PAHO that, “Ivorine never tells me what to do but uses a friendly demeanour when discussing the different options ahead of me. At the end of the conversation, I know my options and I am equipped to make the decision that is best for me – whatever I decide, I know that I can call on Ivorine when I need her.”

To read the full story click [here](#).



HEALTH SYSTEMS AND SERVICES



The Jamaica Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton (second left), and Dr. Bernadette Theodore-Gandi, former PAHO Representative in Jamaica, sign a Technical Assistance agreement that will help to advance Jamaica's healthcare systems and services, on 22 June 2021. Observing (from left) are Dr. Jacqueline Bisasor-Mckenzie, Chief Medical Officer in the Ministry of Health and Wellness; Mr. Dunstan Bryan, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Health and Wellness; and Mr. Casimiro Dias, PAHO Advisor for Health Systems and Services.

As part of supporting the upcoming restructuring of the Ministry of Health and Wellness (MOHW) and Regional Health Authorities (RHAs) and health care reform, Jamaica signed a technical cooperation agreement

with PAHO to provide a national voluntary contribution. Projects were developed to strengthen public financial management and results-based management, as well as a strategic plan for health information systems and a concept note for policy on health research.

Primary health care reform

The PAHO technical cooperation during 2021 focused on the reorganization of Jamaican health centres, with development of Comprehensive Health Centres with higher resolute capacity, and the development and initial implementation of the National Policy of Model of Care for Non-Communicable Diseases in selected pilot sites. This Policy guided the implementation of the MOHW Project on Health Systems Strengthening, funded with an Inter-American Development Bank loan of US\$ 100 million and a €10 million grant from the European Union.

Strengthening results-based budgeting in health

Through the provision of results-based budget guidelines, and a targeted program of capacity building and coaching to support the achievement of universal health and improve access to health services, the goal is to empower the MOHW. It is anticipated that the substantive benefit from this effort will be realized in upcoming MOHW budgets. To this end, the PAHO Country Office successfully developed a project for strengthening public financial management and results-based management through a competitive bid for the United Nations (UN) SDG Funds in 2020, for implementation in 2021 and 2022. In the final months of 2021, an international training on Medium-Term Results Based Budgeting (MTRBB) was conducted with almost 80 staff members island-wide participating in an intensive four-week program to strengthen the MOHW's public finance management

capacity. The MTRBB is a US\$ 1 million investment funded by the SDG Financing Joint Program in Jamaica and implemented by the UN through PAHO, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Development of the National Strategic Plan on Information Systems for Health in Jamaica

As part of efforts to improve information systems in Jamaica, a National Strategic Plan was developed by the MOHW in consultation with key stakeholders in 2021. The Plan was informed by a maturity model assessment and functional assessment with PAHO's technical support. The guidelines developed for health data protection aligned with the Government Data Protection Act.

Development of the concept note for the National Policy on Research for Health in Jamaica

A concept note for the National Policy on Research for Health was developed with the MOHW in 2021. The concept note sets a road map for a national policy on research for health by the MOHW, in close collaboration with other stakeholders, including the University of the West Indies (UWI). The Essential Health Research for the COVID-19 Response was also developed, inclusive of PAHO's support for the participation in the Solidarity Trial and COVID-19 Modelling.

Restructuring Jamaica’s Ministry of Health and Wellness (MOHW) and Regional Health Authorities (RHAs)

The Government of Jamaica established a technical cooperation agreement with PAHO, through a national voluntary contribution to the Organization, in order

to bolster its technical support for the restructuring of the MOHW and RHAs during 2022–2023. In 2021, PAHO assisted with the completion of assessments on health budgeting and service level agreements between the MOHW and the RHAs. Through the restructuring, MOHW aims to strengthen its stewardship capacity, and that of the RHAs, for the transformation of the health systems toward universal health.



Nurse Annie K. Price administers a band-aid following child immunization.



COMMUNICABLE DISEASES



Dr. Michelle Hamilton, Director of Jamaica's National Public Health Laboratory (left), receives the donation of 6000 polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests to identify variants of concern of COVID-19 from Dr. Audrey Morris, Decentralized Regional Advisor, Food and Nutrition (right), at the PAHO offices in Kingston.

Jamaica, in collaboration with PAHO, focused efforts in 2021 on improving strategies and resources to ensure good air quality, detection of infections from blood

samples to inform appropriate antibacterial treatment, and food safety.

New National Road Map for Air Quality

Culminating several years of work, PAHO facilitated the development and delivery of Jamaica's first National Road Map for Air Quality, a strategy aligned with PAHO's [Agenda for the Americas on Health, Environment, and Climate Change 2021–2030](#), which provides guidance to decrease and/or control environmental risk factors for health. The document was elaborated in collaboration with the MOHW and PAHO Headquarters and includes the Jamaica country profile, the legislative and institutional framework, as well as strategies and an action plan for Jamaica to promote and monitor the air quality and its impact on the population's health.

Automated blood culture implementation

A new automated blood culture system was implemented in 2021 at Jamaica's National Public Health Laboratory (NPHL). This system will enhance the country's capacity for detection and control of multidrug-resistant microorganisms. PAHO provided technical support and donated equipment and laboratory supplies toward

implementation of the new system, which replaces a time-consuming manual process. As the NPHL also serves as a clinical laboratory for two major hospitals in Kingston, the successful implementation of the new system has led to increased detection of bloodstream infections and decreased turnaround time for clinical results, allowing better-informed clinical decisions regarding the use of antimicrobials.

Food safety

As part of a strategy to bolster the country's capacity to protect consumers and ensure that domestically produced and imported food adheres to food safety guidelines, PAHO organized and facilitated training on risk-based food inspection for 40 public safety inspectors from Jamaica's health and agriculture ministries in March 2021. This capacity-building exercise was solidified by the national observance of World Food Safety Day in June 2021, when seminars for the general population, students, agriculture and food producers, and business operators were delivered, and key government ministers made high-level commitments to invest and support the public entities in performing their functions.



NONCOMMUNICABLE DISEASES AND MENTAL HEALTH



Sheryl Dennis-Wright, Tobacco Control Consultant (centre), prepares for a recording to explain the Government of Jamaica Tobacco Control Act.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, Jamaica became aware of the need to include mental health in emergency and disaster management, and continued achieving

milestones in tobacco control, road safety, and better nutrition to tackle the high prevalence of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) in the population.

Tobacco control

To address the demand and supply of tobacco and protect future generations from the effects of tobacco consumption and smoke exposure, the Comprehensive Tobacco Control Bill of 2020 was presented to Parliament in December of that year. When the Bill's deliberations were opened, PAHO and the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) Secretariat provided a joint written submission and made an oral presentation in July 2021 before the Joint Select Committee of Parliament. PAHO also provided the services of a consultant over six months who monitored the debate in Parliament and presented evidence and supporting documentation to MOHW staff in support of any of the provisions or recommendations within the law, and to address any challenges by the tobacco industry. Moreover, PAHO conducted a social media public education campaign to inform the public of the provisions included within the Tobacco Control Bill. The MOHW awaits the Bill's passage into law and anticipates that the final approved version of the legislation will be in keeping with the country's obligations to the FCTC.

National Road Safety Policy

Arising from multisectoral collaborations, a draft National Road Safety Policy and Action Plan was developed and submitted to the Ministry of Transport and Mining in December 2021 for their consideration and tabling in Parliament. PAHO engaged a consultant who led the consultations and the development of the draft National Road Safety Policy and Action Plan. This draft provides an update to the 2004 National Road Safety Policy and includes elements of the Safe Systems Approach and strategies and targets aligned with the UN Second Decade of Action on Road Safety.

Mental health

Mental health was an important 2021 focus in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The National Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Technical Working Group was formed with the overall objective of strengthening the intersectoral action on mental health, to advocate for the inclusion of MHPSS in all emergency and disaster management plans, and to harmonize the delivery of MHPSS interventions across agencies. The government ministries, agencies, and departments involved included the MOHW, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the Jamaica Constabulary Force, the Jamaica Fire Brigade, the Jamaica Psychological Society, and the Jamaica Red Cross. PAHO supported the process at different stages by convening the task force before turning over to two national co-chairs, hiring a consultant to develop the terms of reference of the Technical Working Group, developing a situation analysis of MHPSS services in Jamaica, and training members of the Technical Working Group in the use of a tool of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee for MHPSS in Emergency Settings.

Nutrition

PAHO provided technical support for development of the National Infant and Young Child Feeding Policy and Strategic Plan, which were approved by Parliament after several years of being in draft, and key stakeholders were sensitized. The approval of the multisectoral policy provides a mechanism for coordination and integration of infant and young child feeding support and promotion in health care services, education programs, community development initiatives, and workplace policies and practices.

Front-of-package labelling

Jamaica is one of the Caribbean countries participating in the process of revision of the 2010 CARICOM Regional Standard on specification for labelling of pre-packaged foods to incorporate front-of-package labelling specifications. Through a collaboration with the Heart Foundation of Jamaica, a multi-platform communication campaign on “The Right to Know” (what is in the processed foods we purchase) and “We Support Front-of-package Warning Labels: We are on

the side of health” led to enhanced support for front-of-package labelling and a reduction of intake of sugars, sodium, and fats in the diet of Jamaicans. Strengthened advocacy efforts and partnerships were established to highlight findings of research conceived, designed, and conducted by the MOHW, the University of Technology in Jamaica, and PAHO on the efficacy of octagonal front-of-package warning labels. The results of this study have been published as [Superior Efficacy of Front-of-Package Warning Labels in Jamaica](#).



NONCOMMUNICABLE DISEASES AND MENTAL HEALTH

STORIES FROM THE FIELD

Community psychiatric nurse champions mental health during pandemic in the Cayman Islands

Dympna Carten, Community Psychiatric Nurse, is on a mission to champion mental health care and access to services for Caymanians. An Irish native, she was named after Saint Dympna, patron saint of mental illness, who pioneered mental health care in the 7th century, and considers this role her calling. “This is my dream job. No two days are the same because I liaise with a wide range of professionals, a wonderful array of patients and family members, travelling throughout Grand Cayman to deliver care,” explained Carten. “However, the best bit is being part of the journey of mental illness and recovery that my patients and their families live through.”

At the start of the pandemic, Carten was invited to sit on the National Emergency Occupation Centre as the mental health support. She worked with colleagues to set up a mental health helpline, developed a short guide for families to take care of people living with mental health illnesses during the pandemic, and supported colleagues

in other Caribbean countries to set up national mental health helplines and address mental health provision in quarantine facilities. “For the first time, mental health is a major part of the national emergency preparation and response agenda in the Cayman Islands.”

Carten credits regional courses delivered by PAHO and its technical advisers for supporting her in advancing mental health in the Cayman Islands. “I received training from PAHO in Psychological First Aid in Disaster Management in the Caribbean, Integration of Mental Health into Primary Care and Preventing Self-Harm/Suicide. This capacity building, along with the constant availability of technical advisers at PAHO, has equipped me with knowledge of international best practices and the wherewithal to implement the relevant plans to champion mental health in the country.” She is currently enrolled in PAHO’s course on Understanding Stigma and Cognitive Behavioral Interpersonal Skills. “We all have a role to play in building equitable communities for people with mental illnesses. Also, robust mental health care services will benefit each of us at some point in our lives.”

To read the full story click [here](#).



HEALTH THROUGHOUT THE LIFE COURSE



The Kitson Town Health Centre in rural Jamaica.

In 2021, PAHO strongly supported routine national immunization programs via procurement of vaccines and supplies to address the COVID-19 pandemic impact

on supply and delivery. In addition, PAHO continued to assist with other activities centred on a life course approach to health by developing educational resources for adolescent and older people's health.

Routine immunizations

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, PAHO provided strong support to routine national immunization programs that included procurement of vaccines, cold chain equipment, and supplies through the Organization's Revolving Fund for Access to Vaccines using annual demand planning and the COVAX Facility. PAHO also assisted with the update of the Integrated Surveillance Information System (ISIS) and the electronic Joint Reporting Format (eJRF) for immunization programs data assessment, monitoring, and analysis.

Adolescent health course

In a collaboration between the UWI Open Campus and PAHO, an online course based on PAHO materials was developed and delivered on adolescent health for personnel in the public, private and civil society,

health, and other social sectors. The collaboration included the process for review and acceptance of the course by the UWI Open Campus quality assurance mechanisms, promotion of the course to relevant organizations, institutions, and individuals, and provision of recommendations to PAHO on the mode of delivery to a Caribbean-wide community. The first cohort attended in 2019, with all course documents and the final report submitted in March 2021.

Healthy ageing

As part of addressing the needs of older people, the PAHO Country Office published biweekly articles in the local media in 2021. A collaboration with the UWI Mona Ageing and Wellness Centre, in keeping with the launch of the Decade of Healthy Ageing, facilitated the preparation of joint educational materials for circulation to older people, including videos produced by PAHO.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

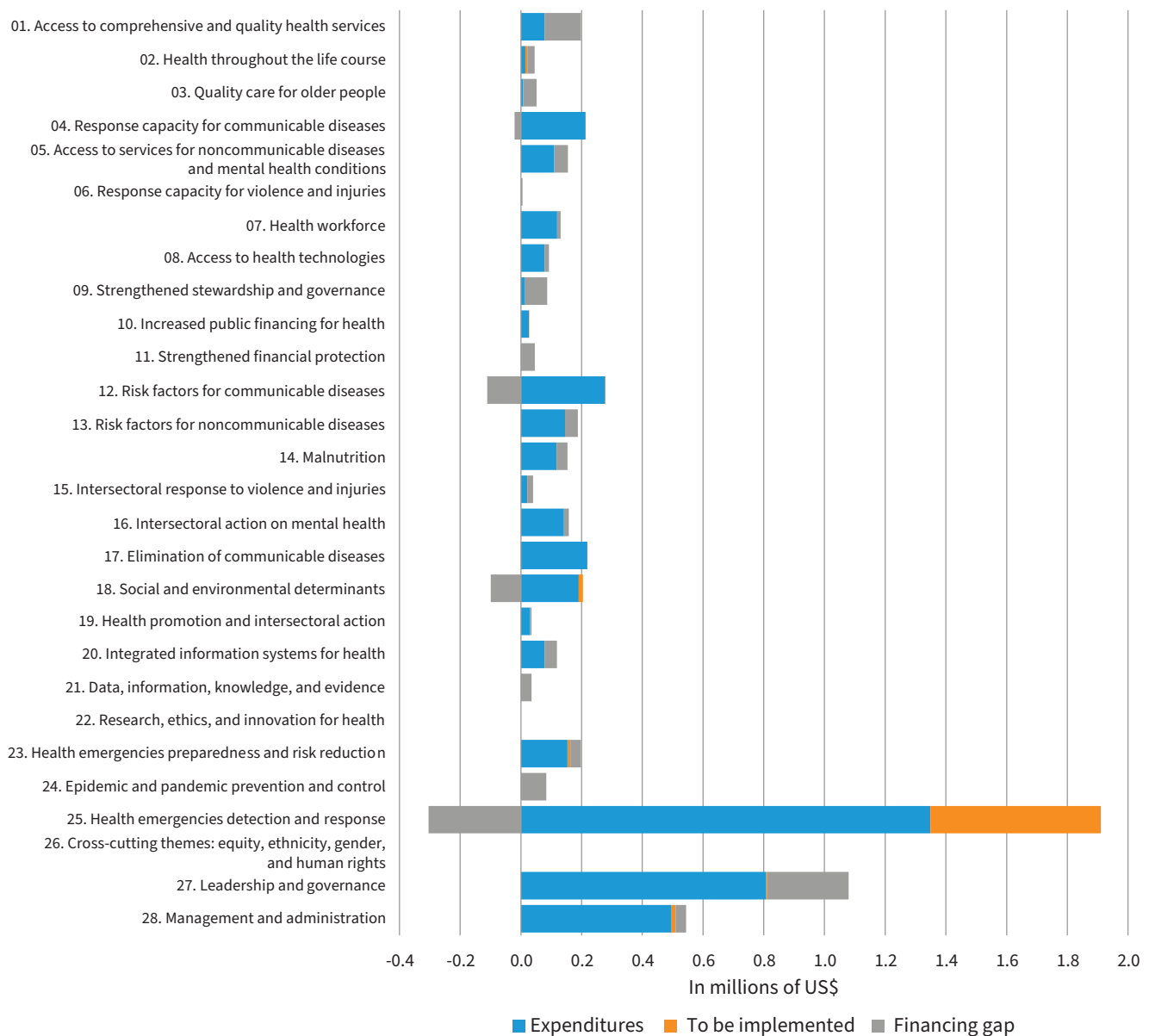
PAHO's reports on the budget and its financing cover a biennial period. Hence, the financial information shown in this report corresponds to the 2020–2021 biennium. For more information, visit <https://open.paho.org/2020-21/country/JAM>, <https://open.paho.org/2020-21/country/BMU> and <https://open.paho.org/2020-21/country/CYM>, and select the “Financial Flow” tab (upper right-hand part of the screen).

With the Organization's declaration of a Public Health Emergency of International Concern in early 2020, and aligned with similar support to Member States and Country Offices throughout the Region of the Americas, the PAHO Country Office in Jamaica received substantial, flexible, voluntary contribution financial support through agreements negotiated through the Organization's global Headquarters in Geneva. Approximately 45% of the resources implemented by the PAHO Jamaica Country Office were financed through this mechanism. These were supplemented by other voluntary contribution agreements, representing approximately 37% of the Country Office's resources, negotiated by PAHO Headquarters, with support from partners including the Governments of the United States of America, Canada, and the United Kingdom, as well as United Nations Multi-Party Trust Funds.

Given the magnitude of the public health emergency, and the priorities negotiated with the Government of Jamaica, the overwhelming focus of the resources was aligned with PAHO's emergency response activities and included substantial procurement of infection prevention and control supplies and support to the country's health sector surge. Efforts related to the outcomes: Outbreak and crisis response; Health emergencies detection and response; Risk factors for communicable diseases; Elimination of communicable diseases; Response capacity for communicable diseases; Risk factors for NCDs; Health emergencies preparedness and risk reduction; Health workforce; Access to services; Access to health technology; and Intersectoral action on mental health, together represented approximately 67% of all resources implemented by the Jamaica Country Office. Additional resources supported the emergency response through leadership, communications, advocacy, and operational expenses, and these represented close to 24% of the implemented resources. The remaining 9% of resources implemented by the Jamaica Country Office reinforced counterpart capacity on outcomes such as, among others: Social and environmental determinants of health; Malnutrition; and Health promotion and intersectoral action.

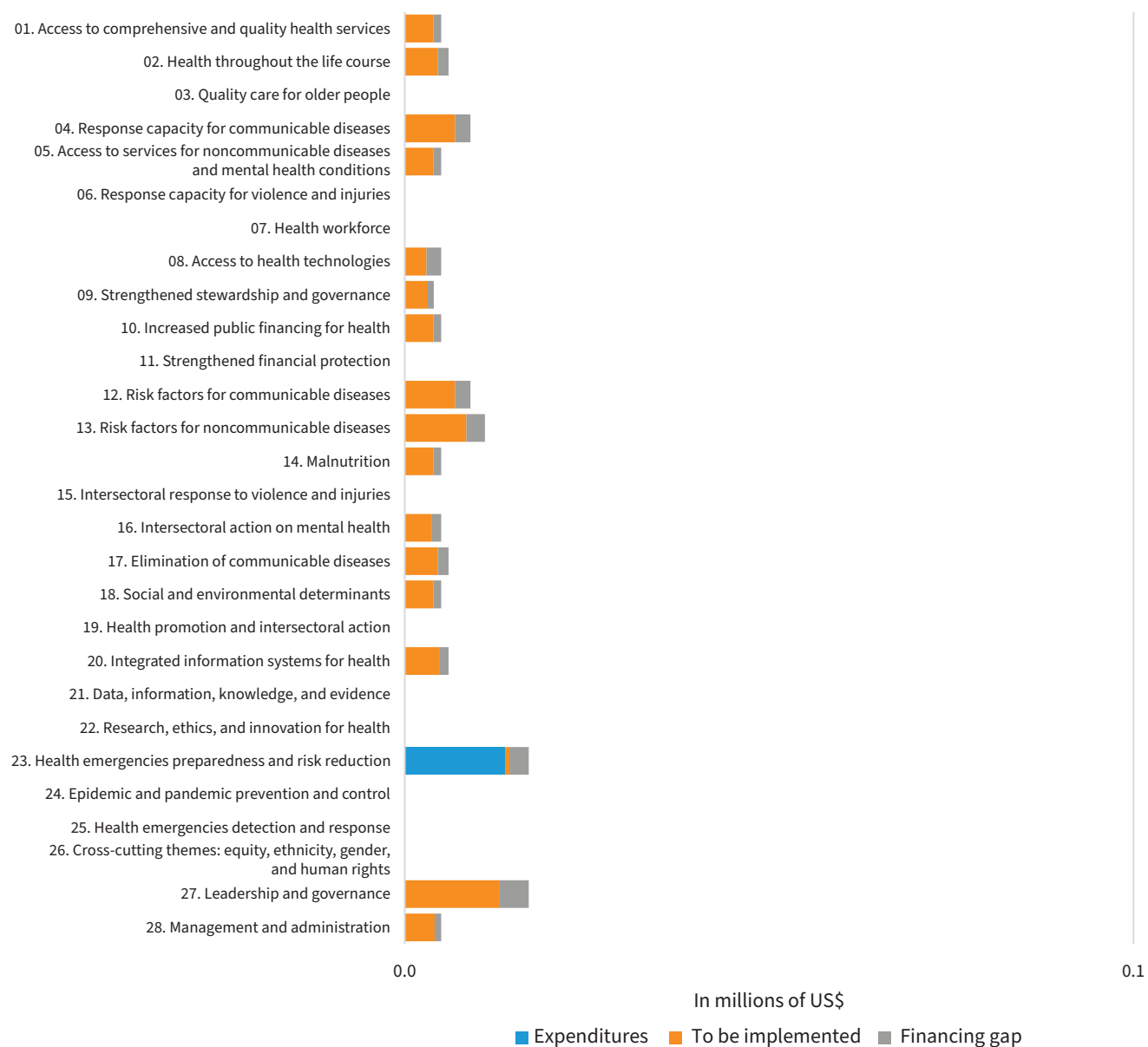
Jamaica

Figure 1. Outcome budget allocations, financing, and implementation: Base programs



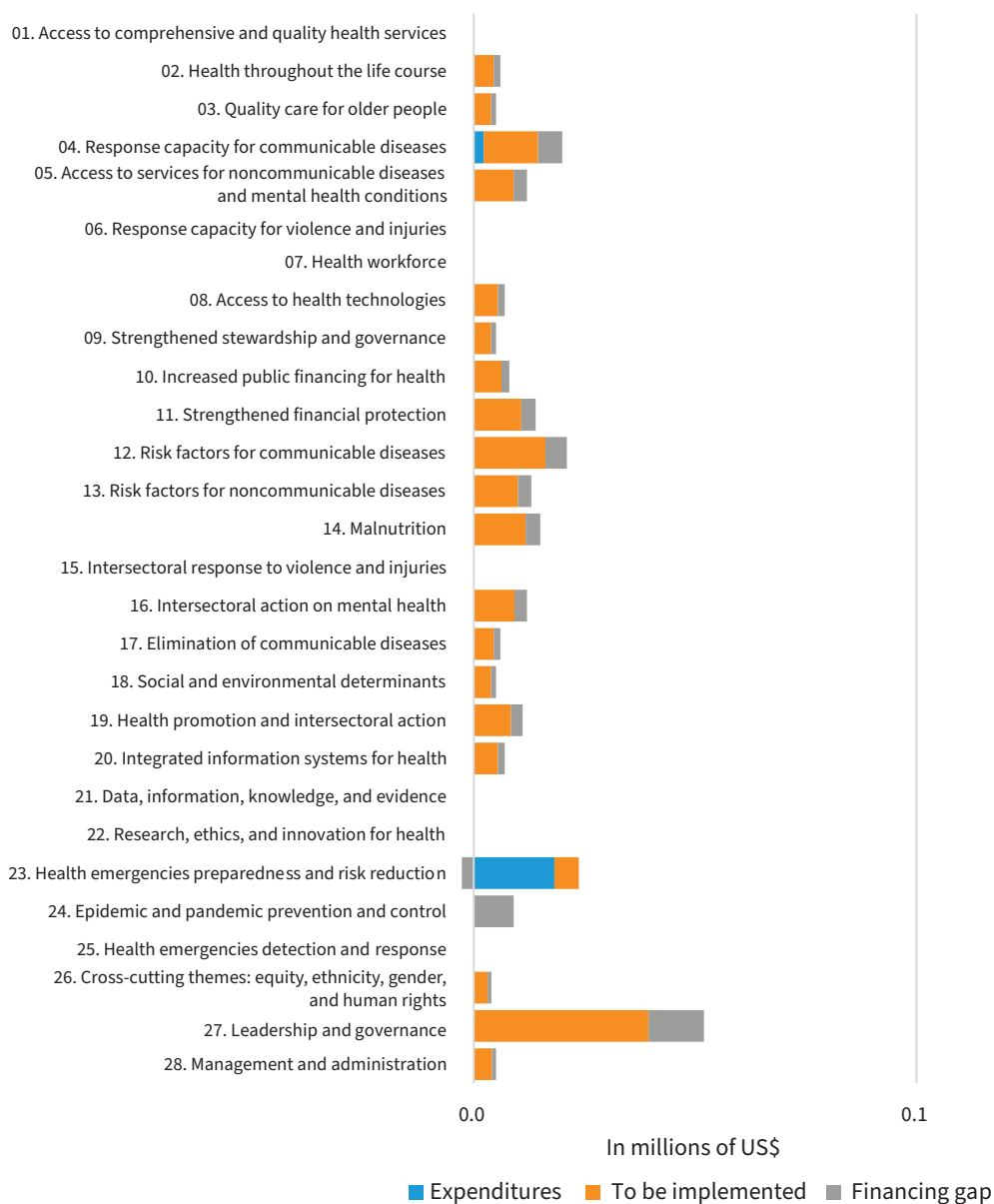
Bermuda

Figure 2. Outcome budget allocations, financing, and implementation: Base programs



Cayman Islands

Figure 3. Outcome budget allocations, financing, and implementation: Base programs



LOOKING AHEAD

We anticipate that 2022 will be a pivotal year as governments make key decisions about the continued COVID-19 response amid growing public frustration with pandemic measures. Bermuda and Cayman Islands remain on track to meet and surpass WHO's call for 70% COVID-19 immunization coverage by mid-2022. Jamaica continues to grapple with high levels of vaccine hesitancy, with new strategies set to be implemented in the coming year. One key strategy will be to conduct a study among older adults on the causes of vaccine hesitancy, the results of which will inform subsequent behaviour change campaigns to reduce hesitancy among this group.

Health systems should now look beyond the critical stage of the COVID-19 pandemic. To achieve this aim, the primary health care model will be reinforced, and strides must be made to ensure equity of access.

The work to bolster public health systems will continue. In Jamaica, the office will continue leveraging international health guidelines and best practices, and will increase partnerships with civil society organizations. In Bermuda and Cayman Islands, plans have been developed to collaborate with the health ministries to strengthen responses to health emergencies and test the resilience of their health systems.

Lastly, we want to thank the MOHW, the other government ministries, and the many stakeholders and partners and partners for their continued collaboration with PAHO, as well as acknowledge the dedicated work of the staff of the PAHO Country Office, which remains committed to delivering strategic and tactical technical advice and building the capacity of local health institutions. In 2022, which will mark the 120th anniversary of the Organization, the PAHO Country Office will renew its commitment to working with all partners in the post-pandemic era.



The PAHO Country Office in Jamaica went blue to recognize the important contribution of healthcare workers.

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