

WEBINAR SERIES ON PRIMARY HEALTH CARE WITH A TERRITORIAL PERSPECTIVE



WEBINAR #1: National quality and patient safety policies within the framework of the Primary Health Care Strategy Executive Summary

ON THE NEW WEBINAR SERIES

The **Primary Health Care and Integrated Service Delivery Unit of the Department of Health Systems and Services (PH/HSS)** of the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) kicked off the [webinars series on Primary Health Care with a territorial perspective](#). This series aims to share experiences and best practices of actors in the territory to illustrate the path towards the development of health systems based on PHC, through the approach of highly relevant issues such as the challenges of access, financing, stewardship and governance and the organization of health services delivery networks. The series of webinars began on April 10, 2024, addressing the main challenges and lessons learned in the development and implementation of national quality policies, strategies and plans in the provision of health services.

4 experiences
(BOL, CRI, PRY, COL)
747 participants
48 countries



Ernesto Báscolo, Unit Chief, Primary Health Care and Integrated Service Delivery, PAHO/WHO

Emphasized the importance of incorporating a territorial perspective into the PHC approach in the region. He highlighted the value of this series in articulating knowledge and technical cooperation with the experiences of the countries in the region. The goal is to identify and prioritize the main challenges in areas with significant gaps in access to health services, aiding in the formulation of policies to strengthen health system responses.

TRIGGERING PRESENTATIONS

Jonás Gonseth, Advisor, Quality in Health Systems and Services, PAHO/WHO

The quality of health systems is central to any evaluation of health system performance and directly impacts the results achieved. He also highlighted the importance of a multidimensional vision of quality that integrates various perspectives, with a special emphasis on patient safety as a fundamental component of quality.



In 2019, PAHO's Member States approved the [Strategy and plan of action to improve quality of care in health service delivery 2020-2025](#); and later in 2023, the [mid-term review](#) report was presented. This strategy emphasizes a comprehensive approach, considering not only quality strategies, but also the strengthening of governance and financing aspects. Finally, he highlighted some guiding resources for the work on quality policies and monitoring that is carried out at the regional level by the Unit and that is available in a [panel of indicators](#).



Blerta Maliqi, Unit Chief, Health Quality, Department of Integrated Health Services, WHO

The achievement of the SDGs is driven by the PHC approach, which promotes and enhances quality in health. In the PHC operational framework, quality is both an operational driver and a health system outcome, permeating all dimensions of this conceptual framework. The WHO team has initiated multi-stakeholder work to identify critical components for the development, implementation, and sustainability of system quality, considering the elements of the [PHC operational framework](#) proposed by WHO. Comprehensive information is necessary for the monitoring and evaluation of quality outcomes, requiring multiple sources from health institutions, providers, clinical registries, and patients. He concluded his presentation by outlining the next steps in building a new conceptual framework for quality assessment tools and methods. This includes progress on a transitional conceptual framework and the development of instruments and methodologies to guide countries in self-assessing their national quality plans and policies.

COUNTRY EXPERIENCES



Marco Antonio Manguía, Head of the Quality Unit of the Ministry of Health and Sports of Bolivia

Progress was made in 2023 with the publication of the [National Health Quality Policy](#), which outlines pillars and strategies for improving quality. These include the evaluation and updating of quality regulations, patient safety, continuous quality improvement, and quality monitoring.

The challenge lies in adopting a more comprehensive approach to quality improvement, which includes strengthening stewardship. They are currently designing the process for implementation.



Yahaira Castro, technical manager of the National Plan for Quality in the Provision of Health Services in Costa Rica

The National Strategy to Improve the Quality of Health Service Delivery, soon to be promulgated, should be designed within the framework of the methodology proposed by the Ministry of Planning. This has been a learning process, enabling the clearer identification of key areas for strategic action. It is crucial for the plan to incorporate strategic actions that are transversal across all levels of care, considering territorial diversities and ensuring an equitable distribution of resources.



Nathalia Meza, Director of Quality at the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare of Paraguay

It is important to incorporate robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) strategies to track the implementation of the plan. The [National Quality Policy](#) has been in force since 2017, and the [National Quality Strategy](#) since 2021. He highlighted the importance of having an organized governance structure to support the implementation of these strategies. For example, the National Directorate of Health Quality was created in 2019. Challenges remain in adapting the policy to different territories.



Luz Adriana Zuluaga, Head of the Quality Office, Ministry of Health of Colombia

Over the last 10 years, the health quality system has been based on a [mandatory health quality assurance system](#), comprising three components: service enablement, quality improvement plans for all actors, and a quality information system. As part of the system's reform, it has been proposed to focus on developing a national and public policy for health quality, implementing ten-year quality plans, and creating an integrated quality system.



Nuria Prieto, Deputy Director of Healthcare Quality, Ministry of Health of Spain

The webinar concluded with a brief commentary by Dr. Prieto, who described the pillars of her decentralized quality system: evidence-based practices, participatory processes, health technology assessment, permanent audits, and a patient safety strategy.

KEY MESSAGES

- There is a growing interest and ongoing development in broadening the perspective of health quality policies and plans to a more systemic approach based on the Primary Health Care Strategy.
- Although the countries of the region face significant challenges in establishing national quality policies that transcend governments and are built in a participatory manner, incorporating the diversity of their territories, there have been substantial advances and lessons learned in these processes.
- The implementation of national quality policies requires a governance and operational structure. This has translated into national strategies and plans that enable the operationalization and evaluation of progress, and the creation of national quality directorates or similar entities, which coordinate and monitor the progress of the proposed strategies.
- Information systems are key to facilitating monitoring and evaluation. These systems need to be implemented at different levels and consider multiple sources, from providers to system users. Colombia exemplifies the implementation of mandatory monitoring systems for the entire health system.
- It is important that national quality policies are articulated with other health and extra-sectoral policies. There are examples in the region of this articulation, such as incorporating the quality perspective in national health or human resources plans, as seen in Costa Rica.
- Improving the quality of health service delivery in our health systems is long-term work, built through successive efforts over many years. This has been demonstrated in the presentations of the countries at this seminar, most of which have ten, twenty, or more years of work to achieve the progress shown.

To view the full recording and access the webinar materials, click [here](#).