News

Vaccination Week in the Americas 2019 kicks off
Department of Family, Health Promotion and Life Course (FPL), Department of Communications (CMU), PAHO-Washington, DC

2019 marks the 17th anniversary of Vaccination Week in the Americas (VWA), a regional campaign with active participation from 45 countries and territories aiming to vaccinate 70 million people against vaccine-preventable diseases, such as measles, polio, influenza and the human papilloma virus, among others. This year’s VWA was celebrated on 20-27 April 2019.

“Protect your community. Do your part” was this year’s theme, with a special focus on ending measles outbreaks and protecting the Region’s achievements. Around 22 countries in the Region plan to vaccinate more than 2.25 million children and adults against this disease, outbreaks of which have been reported in several countries. The Director of the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) Dr Carissa F. Etienne stated: “It is the duty of each one of us to do our part in promoting vaccination whatever our role: from health workers to authorities, but also as parents, grandparents, teachers, mayors, and community leaders.”

At least 19 countries and territories will intensify national immunization programme activities in order to update or complete vaccination schedules in children. A variety of strategies will be employed, including fixed and mobile vaccination posts, vaccination brigades going house-to-house, communication efforts encouraging parents to bring their children to the nearest health centres, and the administration of school-based vaccination to reach older children and adolescents for booster doses.

“We all benefit from the protection offered by vaccines. However, we must ensure that all populations are vaccinated, as is their right. For that, we must make special efforts to reach people who live in remote areas, more deprived neighborhoods, indigenous communities, migrant populations, and people who do not have regular access to health systems, leaving no one behind,” added the PAHO Director. A full video message from the PAHO Director is also available online.

In the last 17 years, more than 740 million people of all ages have been vaccinated against a wide range of diseases during VWA. In addition to this, within the framework of the initiative, many countries allocate health personnel and economic resources to vaccinate people living in remote areas, indigenous communities, and those with limited access to health services.

The regional launch of Vaccination Week was held on 22 April in Cuiabá, Mato Grosso, Brazil, with participation from PAHO Director and the highest health authorities in the country, among others. Other launches were planned the following week, both nationally, binationally, and even trimationally throughout the Region.

Vaccination Week in the Americas 2019 Website
24-30 April 2019: Special report on World Immunization Week 2019
Hayatee Hasan, WHO Headquarters

World Immunization Week, which runs from April 24th to 30th, is a campaign celebrated worldwide and aims to champion the power of vaccines to protect our health and prevent outbreaks.

More children today are immunized against major diseases than ever before. This has resulted in vast health gains, and significant reductions in deaths from vaccine-preventable diseases. New vaccines also offer significant promise. On 23 April, the world’s first malaria vaccine was rolled out in a new pilot programme in Malawi, with the potential to reduce the burden of the disease in some of the most affected countries in Africa.

However, recent outbreaks show that risks loom large, and too many children – approximately 15% globally – are still not fully protected through vaccines. The resurgence of measles, even in countries where it had previously been eliminated, show the very real dangers of complacency around immunization.

This year’s #VaccinesWork campaign comes at a critical time. It will involve all of us – from governments, to health workers and individuals, in our role as parents, teachers, family members or friends – to ensure every person is vaccinated at the right time, and that we remain protected together. Various links to materials and events rolled out during the #VaccinesWork campaign are included below. And a big thank you to everyone who supported WIW 2019 #VaccinesWork.

Read the spotlight on vaccines and the power to protect
More about the World Immunization Week campaign

New measles surveillance data for 2019
Hayatee Hasan, WHO Headquarters

Measles cases have continued to climb into 2019. Preliminary global data shows that reported cases rose by 300 percent in the first three months of 2019, compared to the same period in 2018. This follows consecutive increases over the past two years.

While this data is provisional and not yet complete, it indicates a clear trend. Many countries are in the midst of sizeable measles outbreaks, with all regions of the world experiencing sustained rises in cases. Current outbreaks include the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar, Myanmar, Philippines, Sudan, Thailand and Ukraine, causing many deaths – mostly among young children.

Over recent months, spikes in case numbers have also occurred in countries with high overall vaccination coverage, including the United States of America as well as Israel, Thailand, and Tunisia, as the disease has spread fast among clusters of unvaccinated people.

Measles is one of the world’s most contagious diseases, with the potential to be extremely severe. In 2017, the most recent year for which estimates are available, it caused close to 110,000 deaths. Even in high-income countries, complications result in hospitalization in up to a quarter of cases, and can lead to lifelong disability, from brain damage and blindness to hearing loss.
Improving childhood immunity through MMR mop-up vaccination in daycare and nursery facilities in Barbados
Karen Broome, National Immunization Manager at the Ministry of Health and Wellness in Barbados

The results of the 2015 National Measles, Mumps, & Rubella (MMR) Coverage Survey in Barbados showed an MMR1 coverage of 93% at 12 months of age and an MMR2 coverage of 98% at five years of age. These high coverages are due to legislation mandating that all children be immunized against measles before entering school. However, a decline in the national MMR2 coverage between 2014 and 2018 (from 91% to 74%) has led to a growing number of susceptible children between the ages of one to four years.

In order to ensure adequate population immunity and reduce the risk of a measles outbreak, the Ministry of Health and Wellness targeted the cohort of children aged one to four years, through an Early Childhood Institution (ECI) based MMR mop-up vaccine campaign.

The health team visited all ECIs on the island and inspected the vaccination records of the children. Of the 4,784 children in ECIs, 84% (4,028) had their vaccine records inspected by the health team. The team found that 2.4% of the vaccine records inspected showed no documentation of MMR1 and 6.2% showed no documentation of MMR2.

Parents of children who were found to be missing vaccines were given an appointment to immunize their child at the polyclinic or private doctor. Public health nurses conducted educational sessions with the owners and operators of private and public ECIs and the staff of the Child Care Board (regulatory body). The sessions trained participants on interpretation of the immunization card and the importance of vaccination. ECIs received updated immunization promotional material.

The importance of ECI staff being fully vaccinated was also emphasized and staff of the ECIs were offered the MMR vaccine if they had not previously received two doses. Sixty percent (29) of the ECI owners and operators attending the education sessions were subsequently immunized with MMR.

Mop-up vaccination is ongoing and will be completed in May 2019. Focusing on inspection of vaccination records of children in ECIs is proving to be a good strategy to improve coverage.

Opportunity to participate in a web consultation on the Draft global strategy towards cervical cancer elimination (Submission closes: 10 May 2019)

It is time to eliminate cervical cancer. Almost all cervical cancer deaths could be avoided if all adolescent girls were immunized against human papilloma virus (HPV), if cervical screening and treatment of precancer lesions were available to all women and if all women had access to treatment for invasive cancer with access to palliative care.

In May 2018, the Director General of the World Health Organization announced a global call to action towards the elimination of cervical cancer, underscoring renewed political will to make elimination a reality, and called for all stakeholders to unite behind this common goal.

In January 2019, at its 144th Session, the Executive Board requested the Director General to develop, in consultation with Member States and other relevant stakeholders, a draft global strategy to accelerate cervical cancer elimination, with clear targets for the period 2020–2030, for consideration by the Seventy-third World Health Assembly, through the Executive Board at its 146th session.

The WHO Secretariat is holding a web-based consultation on the draft global strategy. The web-based consultation is open to Member States, organizations of the UN System, academics and non-State actors. By accessing the following link Cervical cancer elimination strategy, participants are invited to review the draft global strategy and participate in an on-line survey.

Submission closes: 10 May 2019
Past Meetings/Workshops

Regional meeting on strengthening capacity of national immunization technical advisory groups (NITAG) in the South East Asia Region (SEAR)

Sunil Bahl and Jayantha Liyanage, WHO SEARO and Louise Henaff, WHO Headquarters

Location: Delhi, India
Date: 11-14 March 2019
Participants: All SEARO countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, DPR Korea, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor Leste) sent NITAG representatives (Chair, Executive Secretary, Ministry of Health or WHO country staff). Other participants included Global NITAG Network (GNN) members from Australia and UK as well as partners (US-CDC, UNICEF and BMGF).

Purpose:
- To understand principles of NITAGs composition, revised guidelines, functioning and collaboration with policy-makers in accordance with WHO guidelines;
- To review criteria to be considered to make evidence-based recommendations on introduction of new vaccines and revision of immunization schedules;
- To discuss the role of the NITAG in monitoring the national immunization programme goals, with emphasis on coverage and equity.

Details:
The meeting was organized by the WHO SEAR Office with the strong support of WHO HQ and the GNN. Since 2017, all countries within SEAR have a functional NITAG with a unique mechanism of reporting progress to the WHO South East Asia Regional Immunization Technical Advisory Group (SEAR-ITAG). With the nomination of new Chairpersons and Members, and the rotation of Executive Secretaries, the meeting was used as an opportunity to update all participants on the work of NITAGs in the Region to date.

The meeting offered a balanced mix of presentations, countries’ experiences and group work on various topics, including NITAG composition, declaration of interest, generating PICO (Patient & Problem, Intervention, Comparison, Outcome) questions, gathering evidence and monitoring national immunization programmes.

The key takeaways from the meetings include:
1. The unique situation of NITAGs in SEAR with clear mechanisms to monitor progress of NIP goals and an extended mandate could serve as a model for other regions;
2. All NITAG members from all eleven countries should receive the same training and orientation offered in this meeting by attending a one-day meeting to be organized by the WHO Country Office;
3. NITAGs recognize the need to review their mode of functioning through the development or revision of standard operating procedures (SoPs) and templates for declaration of interests, recommendations and policy briefs. Best practices from other countries can be used as examples.

All eleven NITAGs will be evaluated in 2019 and the evaluation report will be shared with the SEAR-ITAG.
Workshop on Immunization Data Quality, Analysis and Use

Marcela Contreras, Robin Mowson, Paola Ojeda and Martha Velandia, PAHO-Washington, DC; Marc Rondy, PAHO-Guatemala

Location: Guatemala City, Guatemala
Date: 11-15 March 2019
Participants: Staff responsible for the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) in the 29 health areas of Guatemala, four people from the Integral Health Care System (SIAS for its initials in Spanish) and five from the national immunization programme, as well as representatives from PAHO.

Purpose:
1. Present and discuss updated guidelines from the national immunization programme;
2. Strengthen the capacities of the EPI teams, through practical training in concepts, methodologies and instruments for the analysis and quality monitoring of vaccination data;
3. Understand the functions of the tools for vaccination data quality monitoring and analyses;
4. Identify actions to improve the tools used for vaccination data quality monitoring and the electronic immunization information system in Guatemala.

Details:
The first part of the workshop consisted of a conference where methods to monitor the coverage of public health interventions were presented, with a special focus on data quality and rapid coverage monitoring in Guatemala. Participants had the opportunity to discuss and share local experiences.

The second part of the workshop consisted of individuals and small teams working on various immunization scenarios using data in an accurate way. An Excel matrix proposed by PAHO was provided to participants, so they could apply the plan of analyses discussed during the previous theoretical sessions using their own data.

Participants had the opportunity to carry out field exercises. A group applied the technique for rapid vaccination coverage monitoring (RCM) and went house-to-house checking children’s vaccination status in a neighborhood of Guatemala City. A second group went to a health center to apply the approach for vaccination data quality monitoring taught during the course.

Additionally, the national immunization programme team presented the revised vaccination guidelines, guidelines (including microplanning) for the Measles, Mumps, & Rubella/trivalent oral poliovirus (MMR/OPV) follow-up campaign planned for September 2019.

In addition to improving participant’s skills, this workshop provided the chance to identify possible improvements in vaccination data flows and establish follow-up agreements to improve its quality analysis and use. Ongoing training is important in all areas including vaccination coverage and epidemiological surveillance; PAHO is committed to continue providing technical support for the improvement of data quality in the Americas.
PAHO supports the training of thousands of vaccinators prior to vaccination week in the Americas

Zacarias Garib, Ministry of Public Health in Dominican Republic; Ana Elena Chevez, Leonela Medina, and Yenny Rocío Neira, PAHO, Washington DC

Location: Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
Date: 1-12 April 2019
Participants: Vaccinators, health promoters, Immunization Programme coordinators and epidemiologists at the municipal and provincial levels.

Purpose: To train vaccinators to support the national vaccination campaign against polio and pneumococcus in the Dominican Republic.

Details: For seventeen years, PAHO/WHO and its partners, have celebrated the annual Vaccination Week in the Americas (VWA). Due to this initiative, millions of people have been immunized and six vaccine-preventable diseases have been eliminated from the Region. The Dominican Republic has participated in VWA and this year joins again, with vaccination against polio as its main priority, in response to recommendations from the National Certification Committee and the PAHO/WHO Regional Commission for the Certification of poliomyelitis eradication.

Prior to the beginning of VWA, four PAHO/WHO international experts on vaccination campaigns provided technical support to the national and subnational level teams located in the northeast region of the country and the border zones with Haiti. These areas are considered to be at risk of importing wild poliovirus or at risk of emergence of the circulating vaccine-derived circulating poliovirus. The activities undertaken focused on the planning, organization and social mobilisation required prior to a vaccination campaign launch.

PAHO/WHO also supported the training of 8,000 vaccinators who will be present in more than 1,400 vaccination stations, mobile brigades and among the teams that will go from house to house in order to reach the least accessible places. Likewise, the active search of acute flaccid paralysis cases will be implemented to strengthen epidemiological surveillance in the country. The goal is to vaccinate 525,638 children between the ages of three-35 months against poliomyelitis and 295,985 children against pneumococcus.

VWA was formally initiated on 24 April 2019 in the Dajabón province with a formal event headed by the Minister of Public Health, PAHO/WHO Representative in the Dominican Republic, local authorities and strategic partners. This year, VWA has the slogan “Protect your Community. Do your Part. #GetVax,” that aims to create awareness about the responsibility of each individual and all sectors to keep their communities free from vaccine-preventable diseases.
PAHO meets with the Dominican Republic’s Ministry of Public Health to discuss the situation of the Poliomyelitis Virus

Zacarias Garib, Ministry of Public Health in Dominican Republic; Ana Elena Chevez, Leonela Medina, and Yenny Rocío Neira, PAHO, Washington DC

Location: Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
Date: 16 March 2019
Participants: Rafael Sanchez Cárdenas, Minister of Public Health; Zacarias Garib, EPI Director; Alma Morales, PAHO/WHO Representative in Dominican Republic; Yenny Rocío Neira, PAHO immunization advisor; Jerónimo Canahuiri, Gladys Ghisays, Jamileth Alegria and Bertha Capistrán, PAHO/WHO international consultants; and members of the provincial offices.

Purpose: To discuss the global and regional situation of the poliomyelitis virus and the level of risk for the Dominican Republic to import wild poliovirus or have an emergence of circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus with the Ministry of Public Health’s key staff.

Details: In the framework of Vaccination Week of the Americas (VWA), PAHO/WHO met with the Ministry of Public Health to discuss the global and regional situation of the poliomyelitis virus and the level of risk for the Dominican Republic to import wild poliovirus or have an emergence of circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus.

Additionally, the objective and technical cooperation plan that PAHO’s international consultants provided on the at-risk areas located in the northeast region of the country and border zones with Haiti were presented.

PAHO’s international consultants worked in four regions comprised of 12 provinces and 88 municipalities to coordinate and create partnerships and alliances with regional and local authorities in order to guarantee the goals of the VWA. They also trained local staff, conducted microplanning activities, such as the identification of the target population and the establishment of the vaccination schedule, and actively sought acute flaccid paralysis cases as part of the plan to strengthen epidemiological surveillance in the country.

During the meeting, the challenges and opportunities to improve the immunization programme in the country were also discussed. Key recommendations included the need to strengthen coordination between health services management and the provincial offices, improve the cold chain, extend the schedule for vaccination services and guarantee the appropriate logistics to fulfill the objectives set equitably. Likewise, the country was congratulated for its efforts and achievements in the context of the plan to eradicate the poliomyelitis virus, especially for engagement shown by local staff.
A Decade of Sustainable Immunization Financing
Anupama Varma, Sabin Vaccine Institute

The cost to fully immunize a child continues to rise, and low- and middle-income countries are outgrowing the external funding that keeps their immunization programmes afloat. From 2008-2018, the Sabin Vaccine Institute (Sabin) worked with 23 countries to help them establish sustainable domestic financing solutions for immunization in preparation for their graduation from Gavi support. Sabin’s new report, A Decade of Sustainable Immunization Financing, catalogs the methods, accomplishments and lessons learned over the course of Sabin’s Sustainable Immunization Financing (SIF) Programme.

Sabin is grateful to have been a part of many countries’ journeys toward sustainable immunization financing and hopes this report will be a valuable tool for countries embarking on the important road to full ownership of their immunization programmes.

Please consider sharing this report among your networks and spreading the word using Sabin’s new social media toolkit, which contains prepared messages featuring several leaders who have been vital to their countries’ achievements over the past decade.

Working together: An integration resource guide for planning and strengthening immunization services throughout the life course
Emily Wootton, World Health Organization Headquarters

This document brings together a range of resources to provide an overview of the global policies, potential interventions and strategies related to the integration of immunization services. It also provides guidance and country examples on the integration of immunization with additional health interventions throughout the life course. It is currently available in English and French.

Examples of delivery platforms that can be used to deliver a life course approach for routine immunization
**Breaking News**

**Malaria Vaccine Implementation Programme, MVIP**

Kristen Kelleher, Technical Officer, IVB, WHO

April was historic for immunization: a promising new vaccine to improve child health and protect the most vulnerable from malaria was launched. The malaria vaccine has the potential to save tens of thousands of children’s lives in Africa.

On 23 April WHO welcomed the Government of Malawi’s rollout of the world’s first malaria vaccine in a landmark pilot programme. The country is the first of three in Africa in which the vaccine, known as RTS,S, is being made available to children up to 2 years of age. Ghana followed with its launch of the vaccine on 30 April and Kenya will introduce the vaccine soon.

In this picture you see **Lusitana, a five-month-old from Malawi** who was the first in the world to receive the malaria vaccine in childhood vaccination. This exciting landmark for public health caps a 30-year effort to bring a malaria vaccine into routine immunization.

The Malaria Vaccine Implementation Programme, MVIP, is a country-led, **WHO-coordinated** initiative. WHO partners PATH and GSK, and funders – **Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and Unitaid** – made this long-awaited day a reality. The MVIP is a model public-private partnership to recognize as we mark immunization and malaria recognition days and urge action to do more with new solutions. The news coverage and social media conversations about the milestone was widespread – from North America, Europe and throughout Africa.

We look forward to sharing more about what we learn about RTS,S in its pilot use – this is a tool with the potential to change the trajectory of malaria through the power of vaccines.

Read more about this news and the MVIP:

- WHO news release: [Malaria vaccine pilot launched in Malawi](#)
- Feature story: [Mothers welcome world’s first malaria vaccine in Malawi](#)
- MVIP brochure: [First malaria vaccine in Africa](#)

**Job Posting**

**Senior Technical Adviser (Measles and Rubella control) P5**

World Health Organization Headquarters, Geneva, Switzerland

Deadline for receipt of applications: 14 May 2019

WHO Headquarters are looking for a Senior Technical Adviser with a post-graduate degree in Medicine, Epidemiology, Public Health or related field and 10 years of international experience in managing health projects achieving vaccine preventable disease goals to provide strategic vision and technical leadership in the control of measles, rubella and congenital rubella syndrome. More details of this vacancy and how to apply are available at this link.

To apply for this offer, please click on this [link](#).

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<td>Methodology for Assessing the Impact on New Vaccine Mortality: Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine a Case Study</td>
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Links

Organizations and Initiatives

American Red Cross
Child Survival

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Polio
Global Vaccines and Immunization

Johns Hopkins
International Vaccine Access Center
Value of Immunization Compendium of Evidence (VoICE)
VIEW-hub

JSI
IMMUNIZATIONbasics
Immunization Center
Maternal and Child Health Integrated Program (MCHIP)
Publications and Resources
Universal Immunization through Improving Family Health Services (UI-FHS) Project in Ethiopia

PAHO
ProVac Initiative

PATH
Better Immunization Data (BID) Initiative
Center for Vaccine Innovation and Access
Defeat Diarrheal Disease Initiative
Vaccine Resource Library
Malaria Vaccine Initiative
RHO Cervical Cancer

Sabin Vaccine Institute
Sustainable Immunization Financing

UNICEF
Immunization
Supplies and Logistics

USAID
USAID Immunization
USAID Maternal and Child Survival Program

WHO
Department of Immunization, Vaccines & Biologicals
ICO Information Centre on HPV and Cancer
National programmes and systems
Immunization planning and financing
Immunization monitoring and surveillance
National Immunization Technical Advisory Groups Resource Center
SIGN Alliance

Other
Coalition Against Typhoid
Confederation of Meningitis Organizations
Dengue Vaccine Initiative
European Vaccine Initiative
Gardasil Access Program
Gavi the Vaccine Alliance
Immunization Economics resource
International Association of Public Health Logisticians
International Vaccine Institute
Measles & Rubella Initiative
Multinational Influenza Seasonal Mortality Study
Network for Education and Support in Immunisation (NESI)
Stop Pneumonia
TechNet-21
Vaccine Safety Net
Vaccines Today

WHO Regional Websites

Routine Immunization and New Vaccines (AFRO)
Immunization (PAHO)
Vaccine-preventable diseases and immunization (EMRO)
Vaccines and immunization (EURO)
Immunization (SEARO)
Immunization (WPRO)

UNICEF Regional Websites

Immunization (Central and Eastern Europe)
Immunization (Eastern and Southern Africa)
Immunization (South Asia)
Immunization (West and Central Africa)
Child survival (Middle East and Northern Africa)
Health and nutrition (East Asia and Pacific)
Health and nutrition (Americas)

Newsletters

Immunization Monthly update in the African Region (AFRO)
Immunization Newsletter (PAHO)
The Civil Society Dose (GAVI CSO Constituency)
TechNet Digest
RotaFlash (PATH)
Vaccine Delivery Research Digest (Uni of Washington)
Gavi Programme Bulletin (Gavi)
Immunization Economics Community of Practice