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(GLOBAL IMMUNIZATION NEWSLETTER)

March 2018

Workshop on Quick Responses to Yellow Fever Outbreaks is Held in Peru

Samia Samad, PAHO-Peru; Octavia Silva, PAHO-Washington, DC

Location	Pucallpa, Peru
Dates	21-22 February 2018
Participants	Representatives in the areas of epidemiology, immunization and health network laboratories from the Ucayali Health Management (DIRESA-Ucayali), Peru's Ministry of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO).
Purpose	The purpose of the workshop was to train 45 people from technical teams in the DIRESA-Ucayali health networks and strengthen quick responses to yellow fever outbreaks in the country.

On the first day of the workshop, Dr. Henry Lobato, Regional Director of *DIRESA-Ucayali* expressed gratitude for the support from PAHO/WHO and the Ministry of Health and emphasized that the purpose of the event was to strengthen personnel capacity during a yellow fever outbreak, also focusing on covering areas at risk in Ucayali. Emphasizing this is important given the yellow fever epidemic currently developing in Brazil and the population's mobility potentially increasing the risk.



Yellow fever response workshop in Peru. Credit: Monica Pun, PAHO/WHO.

At the end of the workshop, each technical team had performed a situational analysis on their network, which will serve as material to organize the immunization work plan with all of its components (epidemiology, laboratory, health promotion, communication, statistics and cold chain).



Yellow fever response workshop in Peru. Credit: Monica Pun, PAHO/WHO.

The workshop was evaluated and validated by the *DIRESA-Ucayali*.



Yellow fever response workshop in Peru. Credit: Monica Pun, PAHO/WHO.



Yellow fever response workshop in Peru. Credit: Monica Pun, PAHO/WHO.



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PAHO Holds Workshop on Rapid Responses to Imported Measles, Rubella, CRS Cases and Polio Outbreaks in the Dominican Republic

Patricia Grullon, Ministry of Public Health; Yenny Rocio Neira, PAHO-Dominican Republic; Desiree Pastor, Pamela Bravo, PAHO-Washington, DC

Location	Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
Dates	13-16 February 2018
Participants	Those responsible for epidemiology at the national and sub-national levels; EPI staff at the national level and in high-risk provinces
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen national and sub-national technical capacities to rapidly respond to imported measles, rubella, congenital rubella syndrome (CRS) cases • Conduct an exercise simulating a polio outbreak

In response to the Regional Plan of Action for the Sustainability of Measles, Rubella and Congenital Rubella Syndrome Elimination 2018-2023 and to the Polio Eradication and Endgame Strategic Plan, the Dominican Republic’s Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) conducted a national workshop on preparing rapid responses to imported measles cases and polio outbreaks with support from PAHO/WHO.

This workshop sought to strengthen national and sub-national technical capacities to develop strong responses to diseases that have been eliminated in the Region and avoid their reestablishment in the country. Sixty epidemiologists from the national and provincial levels and EPI coordinators from the country’s high-risk provinces (heavy on tourism and/or migration) participated in the workshop.

The methodology established for this workshop included an evaluation of the participants at the beginning and end, aiming to proportionally determine the knowledge acquired prior to and during this workshop, oriented to handling imported measles cases.

Five presentations were given, followed by a case study and a simulation exercise to respond to imported measles cases. Finally, a second simulation exercise was carried out to respond to polio outbreak detection events.



Rapid response workshop participants, Dominican Republic, February 2018. Credit: PAHO/WHO.



Rapid response workshop participants, Dominican Republic, February 2018. Credit: PAHO/WHO.



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Each group of ten participants had the support of a facilitator, which allowed that in the case study and simulation exercises, participants put into practice what they learned and self-assess the level of knowledge on the national polio outbreak response plan.

Some of the most important results of this workshop have been the activation of the Rapid Response Teams at the subnational level as well as the replication of these workshops at the initiative of the provincial epidemiologists.



Rapid response workshop participants, Dominican Republic, February 2018.
Credit: PAHO/WHO.

To date, ten sensitization and training meetings have been held with other actors on the regional measles situation and rapid response mechanisms, in case there is a case.



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Lessons Learned in the Introduction of the HPV Vaccine in the Region of the Americas

Lucia Helena De Oliveira, Maria Tereza Da Costa Oliveira, PAHO-Washington, DC

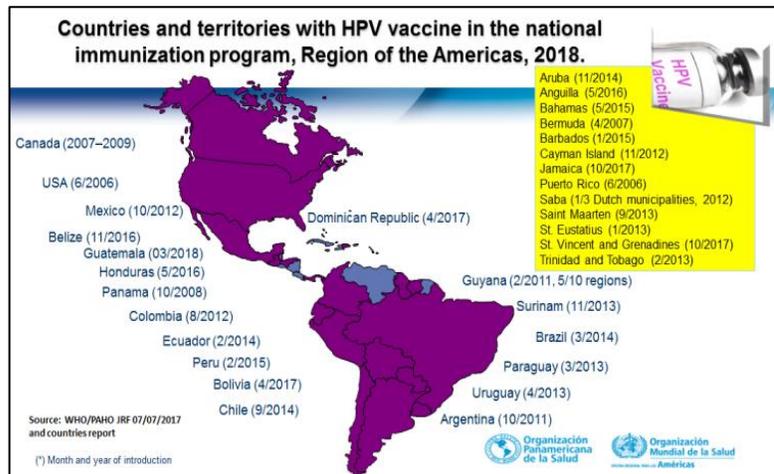
In October 2017, PAHO held a meeting in Guatemala. Twenty-four countries from the Region of the Americas attended to share the lessons learned in HPV vaccine introduction.

The HPV vaccine began to be used in the Region in 2006 (United States) and as of now, 31 countries and territories have included the vaccine in their national immunization programs.

The main topics discussed in the meeting were the challenges in calculating HPV vaccination coverage, vaccine delivery strategies used; the relevance of communication and crisis response plans, as well as preparing to respond to rumors and concerns about HPV vaccine safety.



Participants at the meeting in Guatemala to discuss HPV vaccine introduction. Credit: PAHO/WHO.



Map of countries in the Region that have introduced the HPV vaccine into their national immunization programs.

PAHO is developing a guideline to standardize vaccine coverage calculation in the Region, following recommendations from PAHO’s last meeting of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on Vaccine-preventable Diseases in July 2017.



Launch of the Caribbean Immunization Technical Advisory Group (CiTAG)

Tracy Evans-Gilbert and J. Peter Figueroa

Location	Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
Dates	26-28 February 2018
Participants	Experts in the fields of Epidemiology, Public Health, Microbiology, Pediatrics and Tropical Medicine from four Caribbean countries and ex-officio members from the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO).
Purpose	The purpose of the CiTAG is to strengthen evidenced-based technical advice on immunization and to make recommendations, which will guide policy and the programmatic decisions of Health Ministers and EPI managers in CARICOM member and associated states.

The Caribbean Immunization Technical Advisory Group (CiTAG) was launched during the 33rd Caribbean Immunization Managers' meeting, 26-28 February 2018. The CiTAG, an independent group of experts in the fields of Epidemiology, Public Health, Microbiology, Pediatrics and Tropical Medicine, is chaired by Dr. J. Peter Figueroa, Professor of Public Health, Epidemiology and HIV/AIDS at The University of the West Indies and will advise Ministers of Health on immunization through the Council for Human and Social Development of CARICOM. A representative from the WHO Western Pacific Regional Office also participated as an observer.

With 22 countries/territories in the Caribbean, many of which are too small to support individual National Immunization Technical Advisory Groups (NiTAGs) and given the history of Caribbean countries working successfully together in health, the Health Ministers took the wise decision in 2017 to establish the sub-regional CiTAG. This is an efficient mechanism to provide independent advice on immunization to the Ministers of Health in keeping with the recommendations of the Global Vaccine Action Plan (GVAP) and PAHO'S Regional Immunization Action Plan (RIAP).

Recent hurricanes in the Caribbean and outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases in neighboring countries are a stark reminder that Expanded Programs on Immunization (EPIs) must be resilient and vigilant to maintain the polio, measles, CRS and rubella-free status of the Caribbean.

Priority areas for the CiTAG include sustaining confidence in immunization; promoting the strengthening/development of legislative frameworks to support vaccination; enhancing data quality through the implementation of electronic immunization registries; surveillance of vaccine-preventable diseases; strengthening laboratory capacities and linkages between EPI, surveillance, laboratory and the private sector and building capacity of EPI managers through training.



33rd Caribbean Immunization Managers’ Meeting and Risk Communication Training Workshop

Karen Lewis-Bell and Nathalie El Omeiri

Location	Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
Dates	26 February-2 March 2018
Participants	National immunization managers from the 26 English and Dutch-Speaking Caribbean countries as territories, as well as Haiti <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overall objective of the 33rd Caribbean EPI managers’ meeting was to analyze achievements for 2017 and plan activities for 2018 while sharing country experiences on the immunization program. • The purpose of the Risk Communications training workshop was to train managers of the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) in the principles of risk communication to encourage positive behavior change in support of vaccination, strengthen the capacity of EPI managers to develop immunization messages targeting various audiences (parents, children, anti-vaccine groups) and to effectively communicate with the media and the public.
Purpose	

The 33rd Caribbean EPI Managers’ Meeting convened 70 persons from 29 countries/territories and was opened by the Minister of Health, Honorable Terrence Deyalsingh, who gave the main address.



Participants at the 33rd Caribbean EPI managers’ meeting in Trinidad and Tobago, March 2018. Credit: PAHO/WHO.

Presentations focused on specific vaccine-preventable diseases (VPDs), EPI programmatic areas and global and regional/sub-regional updates. Countries shared experiences with VPD surveillance, as well as sustainability plans for measles, introduction of new vaccines, Vaccination Week in the Americas, measles, yellow fever and diphtheria outbreaks and the implementation of electronic immunization registries (EIRs).

Vaccination coverage in the Caribbean remains higher than the regional and global average with DTP3 being 95% in 2016 compared to 91% in the Americas and 86% globally. Despite plans to sustain measles, rubella, CRS and polio elimination, countries need to improve the quality of surveillance systems for timely detection and management of importations.

The Caribbean has been validated for the containment of WPV2, VDPV2 and OPV2/Sabin 2 infectious and potentially infectious materials. Countries were reminded to conduct periodic audits/surveys to validate the quality of their coverage data.

The Risk Communication workshop focused on the Single Overarching Communication Outcome (SOCO), how to develop messages and the principles of effective communication using various media. Participants worked in groups to develop SOCOs and messages using



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examples of myths/beliefs and challenges with the uptake of the influenza and MMR vaccines while sharing and exploring strategies to address these through effective communication.

Overall, the 33rd Caribbean EPI Managers' meeting and Risk Communication Training workshop were successful and participants benefitted greatly.