



# PAHO Immunization GIN Articles



(GLOBAL IMMUNIZATION NEWSLETTER)

May 2018

## Vaccination Week in the Americas 2018 Launches in Cuba

FPL, PAHO-Washington, DC; CMU, Washington, DC

Vaccination Week in the Americas (VWA) was launched on 23 April in Havana, Cuba – a first-time launch location for the 16-year-old campaign. This year’s slogan was “Strengthen Your Defense! #GetVax #VaccinesWork” and had a football theme as the FIFA World Cup will be celebrated soon after.

“Vaccination is one of the most powerful tools we have to prevent disease and save lives,” said Carissa F. Etienne, Director of PAHO, at the opening ceremony, which took place at the Victoria de Giron Institute of Basic and Preclinical Sciences. Ministers and other high-level health authorities from Latin America, the Caribbean, and other regions of the world participated in the launch.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO), also participated in the regional launch of Vaccination Week in the Week in the Americas, which has served as the base for World Immunization Week since its start in 2012.

"Not only does Cuba enjoy universal coverage for vaccines, [it is] also a producer and exporter of these life-saving products," said Dr. Tedros.

"World Immunization Week is an opportunity to remind all nations and all people of the incredible value of vaccines."

During the opening ceremony, the Cuban Deputy Health Minister, Jose Angel Portal Miranda, emphasized that in Cuba “vaccination is available to everyone, free of charge, and can be accessed from primary health care providers. As a result,



VWA 2018 launch in Havana, Cuba. Credit: PAHO/WHO



VWA 2018 launch in Havana, Cuba. Credit: PAHO/WHO



VWA 2018 launch in Havana, Cuba. Credit: PAHO/WHO



VWA 2018 launch in Havana, Cuba. Credit: PAHO/WHO



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vaccination coverage in Cuba for all vaccines currently stands at 98%, resulting in high population immunity.”

Portal Miranda also highlighted that an average of 4.8 million vaccines against 13 diseases are administered each year in Cuba, with eight of the 11 vaccines that are given being produced in the country itself. He also reminded the audience that the first polio prevention campaign in Cuba took place in 1962 with the vaccination of 2.6 million children and adolescents under the age of 15. Thanks to this and other initiatives, the country was the first in the Region to eliminate polio.

## Uruguayan Footballer Edinson Cavani Joins Campaign for Vaccination Week in the Americas 2018

*FPL, PAHO-Washington, DC; CMU, PAHO-Washington, DC*

Uruguayan football star Edinson Cavani joined the Vaccination Week in the Americas 2018 campaign. The striker for the Uruguayan national team and Ligue 1 club Paris Saint-Germain appears in a public service announcement (PSA) encouraging children, parents and the whole family to “make the best goal of their lives” and get vaccinated.



Screenshot of VWA 2018 PSA with Edinson Cavani

Cavani shared our messages on his own Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts, receiving 250,000 likes; his video has received 545,000 views. You can see the PSA (in English, Spanish, French or Portuguese) at <https://youtu.be/uaz1xPCxOTU>



### Country Activities for Vaccination Week in the Americas 2018

*Elizabeth Thrush, Maite Vera Antelo, Lauren Vulanovic, Alba Maria Roper, Octavia Silva, PAHO-Washington, DC*

Countries conducted a wide range of activities throughout this year's Vaccination Week in the Americas (VWA), from communication and social mobilization to community sensitization, health care worker training, and the vaccination of more than 70 million individuals, through a multitude of national vaccination efforts.

#### Sustaining Measles Elimination

- Measles was declared as eliminated from the Americas in 2016 after the declaration of the elimination of rubella and congenital rubella syndrome (CRS) in 2015, culminating a 22-year mass vaccination effort against measles, mumps and rubella.
- Due to the risk of importation of measles and current outbreaks happening in our Region, more than 11 countries took VWA 2018 as an opportunity to intensify vaccination efforts against measles, with a goal of reaching approximately 6,000,000 people.

#### Sustaining Polio Elimination

- At least 14 countries vaccinated against polio as part of VWA 2018 activities: Brazil, British Virgin Islands, Colombia, Cuba, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Paraguay, St. Lucia, St. Maarten, and Turks and Caicos.
- Cuba conducted their 57th annual mass polio vaccination campaign to sustain polio elimination; this campaign reached more than 480,000 children.

#### Efforts to Complete Basic Vaccination Schedules

- At least 22 countries and territories used VWA 2018 to intensify activities of the routine national immunization programs and administer multiple vaccines to improve coverage by starting, updating or completing childhood vaccination schedules.



Vaccinators in Honduras heading to vaccinate populations in Moskitia and Garifuna for VWA. Credit: PAHO/WHO



VWA is celebrated in Costa Rica. Credit: PAHO/WHO



Guyana celebrates VWA. Credit: PAHO/WHO.



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## Protecting Vulnerable Populations

- Every year, VWA is an opportunity to reach underserved populations. This year, 16 countries reached out to populations in situations of vulnerability, including pregnant and postpartum women, health workers, older adults, indigenous populations, individuals with chronic disease, and prisoners and prison workers, among other occupational risk groups and vulnerable populations.
- Several countries focused efforts to protect occupational health workers against a range of diseases such as Hepatitis B, tetanus, and influenza.
- As part of Brazil's Month of Vaccination of Indigenous Peoples, a combined effort of the National Immunization Program and the Department of Indigenous Health was done to update the vaccination schedules of approximately 600,000 individuals in 1,373 indigenous communities, in addition to administering the annual dose of the influenza vaccine.



Chile celebrates VWA. Credit: PAHO/WHO

## Communication Activities

- 27 countries carried out activities to improve public awareness regarding the importance of immunization for good health. Examples of these include health fairs, sensitization sessions, and other public awareness activities.

## Integrated Health Activities

- The use of VWA for the integration of other public health activities together with vaccination has become systematized throughout much of the Region.
- 16 countries (Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, St. Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago) integrated other health interventions during VWA 2018.
- Examples include: Vitamin A distribution; deworming; prevention of mosquito borne diseases such as yellow fever, dengue, Zika, and chikungunya; health screenings for diabetes; vaccination of pets; promotion of healthy eating habits; domestic violence awareness; mental health screenings; and cancer awareness.



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## Regional Communication Campaign for Vaccination Week in the Americas 2018

*FPL, PAHO-Washington, DC; CMU, PAHO-Washington, DC*

This April marked the 16th anniversary of Vaccination Week in the Americas (VWA), and the 6th World Immunization Week (WIW). Inspired by 2018's FIFA World Cup in Russia, the regional slogan for this year's campaign was "Strengthen your defense! #GetVax #VaccinesWork." This slogan used the strengthening of a soccer team's defense as a metaphor for strengthening one's defense against diseases preventable through vaccination.

The VWA web site ([www.paho.org/vwa](http://www.paho.org/vwa)) was revamped for the 2018 campaign and featured general campaign materials, as well as those geared at measles and rubella vaccination and surveillance activities.

To engage with staff in PAHO HQ and country offices, staff had the option to participate in a quiz each day. Everyone who correctly answered the question was entered to win a PAHO soccer ball. In the end, balls were won by one person in the PAHO office in Guyana, two people in the PAHO office in Honduras, and two people from HQ in Washington, DC.

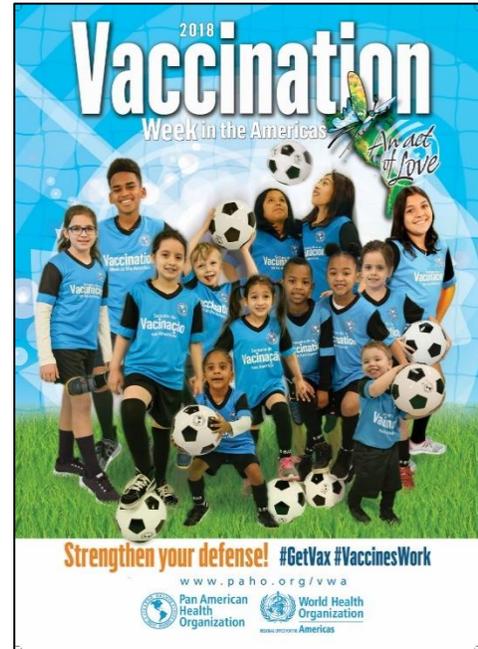
On Twitter, we reached 458k people, 793 quizzes were submitted, Facebook posts reached 306k people, Instagram posts reached approximately 21k and LinkedIn posts reached approximately 15k people.

### Social Media Results

A social media package, featuring infographics, videos and images, was sent out to PAHO country offices. From the regional account alone:

- More than 800,000 people reached through social media;
- 5,320 people visited the website for a total of 13,374 visits (some of the visits were repeat visitors);
- Uruguayan football star Edinson Cavani shared our messages on his own Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts, receiving 250,000 likes; his video has received 545,000 views.

In terms of press, VWA was mentioned in over 200 articles in more than 28 countries in the Region and the world. Many articles focused on the importance of measles and rubella vaccination.



Poster for Vaccination Week in the Americas 2018



## Vaccination: Three Women in Nicaragua Take a Different Journey towards a Common Goal

*Sonia Mey, Harold Ruiz, PAHO-Washington, DC*

Karla Bethania Ortiz, 26, from Comarca Bosque de Xiloá, Nicaragua, never understood why she was not vaccinated as a child. Unlike her friends, she did not have a vaccination card.

One day when a “brigadista” or community health volunteer was walking near her home, she decided to chase her down and asked to be vaccinated. It happened to be “Jornada de Vacunación” – the day vaccines are provided to all in the community free of charge.

However, because Karla was a minor, she needed parental consent. Karla knew her mother, Silvia Elena Ortiz, did not believe in vaccines, but she decided to bring the health worker to her home to explain the benefits of vaccination. With more information, Silvia agreed to have Karla vaccinated. “I was very proud to receive my first vaccine and my vaccination card,” Karla says.

Now, with three children of her own, Karla never misses a “Jornada de Vacunación del Poder Ciudadano” organized by the Ministry of Health of Nicaragua and supported every year by WHO/PAHO, to vaccinate the community in hard-to-reach areas.

Today, Karla will take her 2-month-old daughter, Franeichy, to receive her WHO-recommended vaccines at the Xiloá Health Centre. It’s 6 a.m. and Karla wakes up to prepare breakfast, bathe her children, and dress them for the special occasion. Karla and her entire family leaves the house at 8:30 a.m. and walk to Lagoon Xiloá, where a boat picks them up for a 10-minute ride to Xiloá.

Hours before Karla’s family wakes up, nurse Maritza Elena Pallavicini Cruz, 51, is at home preparing for the “Jornada de Vacunación” in Los Brasiles, Nicaragua—an hour’s journey from the health centre in Xiloá. After knowing two children who were paralyzed from polio when she was a child, Maritza decided she want to be a nurse. That was more than 30 years ago. “My



Still of “An act of love in the land of lakes and volcanoes, Nicaragua.”



Still of “An act of love in the land of lakes and volcanoes, Nicaragua.”



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wish is that no child in my country dies from disease that can be prevented through immunization,” she says.

This article was excerpted from a longer article on the PAHO site. Please click [here for the complete article](#) and [here](#) for “An act of love in the land of lakes and volcanoes, Nicaragua,” a video illustrating the story described above.



## The Night of Vaccines is Celebrated in Argentina

PAHO-Argentina

Agustina receives the flu shot and runs to continue painting landscapes; Simon proves his dexterity with a ball made with socks and then responds to the call of his mother waiting in line for the measles dose; Elsa hurries with her cane while the vaccinator waits to give her the flu vaccine. In the background, a folkloric group plays on the stage, while around them children and adults try different sports and artistic games.



The Night of Vaccines, Cordoba, Argentina, April 2018.  
Credit: PAHO/WHO

This scene corresponds to “The Night of Vaccines,” a vaccination initiative in the province of Córdoba, Argentina, held with support from PAHO/WHO to celebrate vaccination.



The Night of Vaccines, Cordoba, Argentina, April 2018.  
Credit: PAHO/WHO

For six hours, from 8 pm to 2 am, the Pediatric Hospital of the Child Jesus (*Hospital Pediátrico Del Niño Jesús*) opened its doors to the community to give the vaccines included in the national vaccination schedule for free and at the same time, offer various musical shows, games for children and soccer-tennis matches, among other forms of entertainment.



The Night of Vaccines, Cordoba, Argentina, April 2018.  
Credit: PAHO/WHO

This was the fourth edition of the initiative, which is on the rise every year. In total, 6,305 doses were applied this year.

The Night of Vaccines takes place in the framework of Vaccination Week in the Americas, which was held from 21 to 28 April this year, with a focus on football in the context of the 2018 World Cup. For that reason, footballs, shirts and blue and white hats – with the colors of the Argentine flag – were present throughout the night.

"It's a vaccination party," highlighted Hospital Director, Silvia Ferreyra, as she approached the tent where 50 vaccinators were present to apply doses. "It's a very good initiative in which we are all equal, regardless of whether we have social security or not," Florencia Córdoba noted while waiting to receive the vaccine against hepatitis B in the long line of attendees.

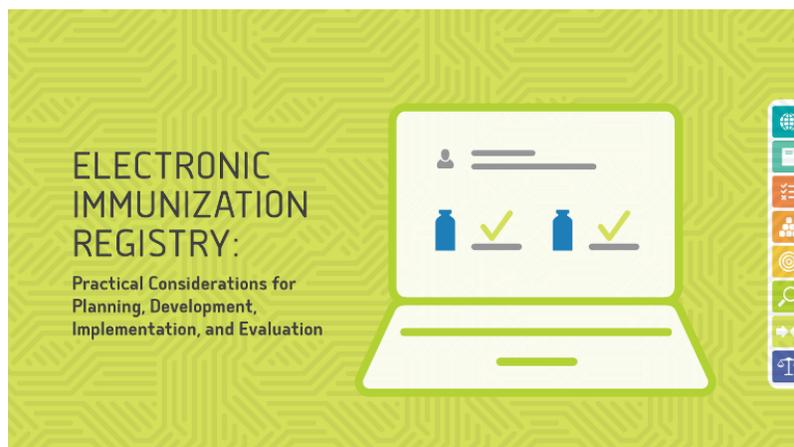


## Electronic Immunization Registry: Practical Considerations for Planning, Development, Implementation and Evaluation

This document is designed to support EPI managers and their teams in the implementation of information systems related to Electronic Immunization Registries (EIRs), using the various experiences compiled at the global level – and, especially, in the Region of the Americas – as a foundation.

Within this context, the main objectives of this document are as follows: 1) To generate knowledge related to information systems and immunization registries for immunization program managers at the national and subnational levels; 2) To provide teams, EPI managers, and experts in health information systems with relevant background and experiences for development, implementation, maintenance, monitoring, and evaluation of EIR systems, so as to support planning of their implementation; 3) To provide technical, functional, and operational recommendations that can serve as a basis for discussion and analysis of the standard requirements needed for development and implementation of EIRs in countries of the Region of the Americas and other regions; 4) To serve as a platform for documentation and sharing of lessons learned and successful experiences in EIR implementation.

This document is structured into three major sections: background; EIR planning and design; and EIR development and implementation, considering the relevant processes and their structure. The content of the chapters is supported by a literature review of aspects related to EIR requirements and summarizes the experiences of the countries of the Region of the Americas and other regions that already have EIRs in place or are at the development and implementation stage.



English: <http://iris.paho.org/xmlui/handle/123456789/34865>

Spanish: <http://iris.paho.org/xmlui/handle/123456789/34864>

French: <http://iris.paho.org/xmlui/handle/123456789/34957>