

Wellness Week 2016

All for health – Step Up!

Concept Note

This year, Wellness Week 2016 will be celebrated from September 10th-18th in the Americas, along with the Caribbean Health Day which is scheduled on Saturday, September 10th, 2016. Wellness Week brings individuals and organizations together to share current initiatives and best practices being conducted in the Americas to promote health and wellbeing, in places where people live, learn, work and enjoy their daily lives.

As is tradition, the Pan American Health Organization will observe priority themes of public health concern and will reinforce key messages from the [World Health Day, which](#) highlighted the importance of tackling **diabetes**, a non-communicable disease (NCD) that directly impacts millions of people globally. In 2011, the General Assembly of the United Nations identified diabetes as one of four non-communicable diseases that pose a serious threat to the lives people worldwide, calling on countries to tackle this disease in order to protect and promote the health of their citizens (1). The global diabetes prevalence has quadrupled since 1980 and is expected to double by 2020, indicating that this is a public health matter of growing importance (2). The World Health Organization reports that 422 million people worldwide live with diabetes and that the diseases accounted for 1.5 million deaths in 2012, with over 80% of deaths occurring in low and middle income countries (3). In the Americas, 62 million people live with diabetes, constituting approximately 8% of the region's total population (2). The causes of diabetes are a complex, but the increase is in large part due to rapid increases in overweight, including obesity and physical inactivity (4). Evidence has shown that a large proportion of cases of diabetes and its complications can be prevented by a healthy diet, regular physical activity, maintaining a normal body weight and avoiding tobacco, however, these practices are not widely implemented.

In addition to diabetes-related topics such as **healthy eating** and **active living**, other important subjects will be addressed during WW2016, such as:

- **Reducing stress at the workplace.** Workplace stress and mental health problems at work are collective challenges that jeopardize the workers' health and productivity, and eventually trespass the boundaries of work invading family and community life. Consequently, there is an increasing need to promote healthy workplaces, foster kindness and respect, and implement actions that enhance and promote health, safety and wellbeing at work; work-family balance; and mental and psychological wellbeing.
- **Uncovering disabilities.** WHO's estimates that over one billion people in the world live with some form of disability, this represents 15% of the global population. The people with disabilities experience barriers in accessing services that many of us have long

taken for granted, as a result they have poorer health outcomes, lower education achievements, less economic participation and higher rates of poverty than people without disabilities.. In most instances, the social and the built environment do not accommodate people with disabilities. Action to remove barriers which prevent to people with disabilities participating in their community, getting a quality education, finding decent work, and having better health is crucial if we are for social inclusion.

Under the slogan ***“All for Health, Step Up!”***, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) will be leading the Wellness Week 2016 celebrations from September 10th-18th. The slogan highlights the connection between two important events taking place in 2016. The first part of the slogan reflects on the slogan of the 9th Global Conference on Health Promotion ***“Health for all, and all for health”*** in an iconic year for the health promotion that celebrates the 30th anniversary after the Ottawa Charter of health promotion was developed. The second part of the slogan seeks to reinforce this year’s tagline for the World Health Day ***“Step Up, Beat Diabetes”***.

PAHO invites all national and local institutions to celebrate Wellness Week by engaging in culturally appropriate health-related activities and showcasing initiatives that promote health and well-being for all at all ages, with special focus this year on healthy eating and active living.

For more information and to join in the celebration, we invite you to register your activities and share pictures on www.paho.org/wellnessweek
If you are for health, Wellness Week is for you. Thank you.

References

1. United Nations, General Assembly, 2011 High Level Meeting on Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases. <http://www.un.org/en/ga/ncdmeeting2011/>
2. World Health Organization, 2016 Global Report on Diabetes. http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/204871/1/9789241565257_eng.pdf?ua=1&ua=1
3. World Health Organization, World Health Day 2016: Beat Diabetes. <http://www.who.int/campaigns/world-health-day/2016/en/>
4. World Health Organization. WHO Global Health Days. <http://www.who.int/campaigns/world-health-day/2016/how-to-get-involved/en/>

Launch of Wellness Week

During the weeks prior to Wellness Week

- Invitation through Listserv and Social Media to national and local institutions to announce the activities being planned for Wellness Week
- Key messages sent through PAHO's social media channels
- Mapping of activities planned for Wellness Week and resources published in PAHO's sub-site
- PAHO's stairs conditioned to attract users interested in becoming more physically active at the workplace. A campaign to keep the stairs shades down to reduce improve the energy efficiency of the building and cool down the stairs temperature will be conducted. Also, some decorations will be proposed to GSO to make stairs a friendlier and more attractive space for regular use by PAHO staff and visitors.
- Quiz: How much do you really know on disabilities?