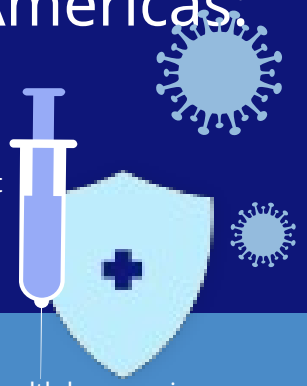
Respiratory diseases vaccination in the Americas: From birth to adulthood

Vaccines are essential for protecting against respiratory diseases throughout the life cycle, reducing the risk of illness, hospitalizations, and deaths by up to 90%. By getting vaccinated at every stage of life, we safeguard ourselves, our loved ones, and our communities, fostering a healthier and safer future for everyone



THE NATIONAL IMMUNIZATION PROGRAMS IN THE AMERICAS

The National Immunization Programs in the Americas play a crucial role in protecting public health by ensuring access to life-saving vaccines for all people. For over 40 years, the success of the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) has made the Americas a global leader in the elimination and control of vaccine-preventable diseases (VPDs), such as smallpox, polio, rubella, congenital rubella syndrome, measles, and neonatal tetanus. These programs have successfully reduced or eliminated many dangerous diseases, saving countless lives. By keeping vaccination rates high, countries in the Americas can prevent the spread of VPDs, protect vulnerable populations, and create healthier communities. Strong, well-supported immunization programs are key to achieving long-term health security across the region.

REGIONAL VACCINATION SUCCESSES AND PROGRESS

The **Special Comprehensive Immunization Program (CIM)** aims to **foster and coordinat** technical cooperation and partnerships that assist Member States in their efforts to **sustainably and equitably decrease morbidity and mortality from vaccine-preventable diseases** (VPDs). This is achieved through strategies for control and elimination ultimately enhancing the quality of life and life expectancy for people across the Americas.[1]

The Americas region has made **significant strides in combating respiratory diseases through widespread vaccination efforts**. By implementing effective immunization programs, countries have successfully reduced the incidence of diseases such as pneumonia, COVID-19, and influenza.

Regional initiatives like Vaccination Week in the Americas have an impact on **raising awareness by uniting countries across the region to promote the importance of vaccination, increase coverage, and ensure that vulnerable populations** have access to life-saving vaccines.[2]

MAIN GAPS TO GUARANTEE PRIORITIZATION OF VACCINATION FOR RESPIRATORY DISEASES (RD) IN THE REGION

PRIORITIZATION OF HIGH-RISK GROUPS AND COVERAGE

- **Lack of prioritization of vaccination for RD in programs for high-risk populations.**
- **Lack of transparency in new vaccines decision making processes.**
- **Challenges in reaching coverage targets even though the programs are comprehensive.**

Why it Matters: Prioritizing high-risk populations, improving coverage, and ensuring transparency in vaccine decisions are crucial for effective disease prevention and timely adoption of new vaccines or indications of vaccines.

GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION & CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT

- **Decline in vaccine confidence.**
- **Lack of measurement strategies to guarantee effective campaigns.**
- **Civil society's role is limited to information dissemination, without broader involvement.**
- **Opportunities for improved communication among stakeholders.**

Why it Matters: Strong communication and support from civi society are essential for building trust in vaccines and ensuring people are informed about the importance of vaccination.

INFRASTRUCTURE & PERSONNEL FOR VACCINE DISTRIBUTION

- **Underdeveloped infrastructure and logistics for vaccine supply.**
- **Shortage of personnel with adequate qualifications.**
- **Limited access in remote areas.**

Why it Matters: Efficient storage, distribution, and administration of vaccines are critical to ensure timely vaccination, especially in remote areas where access is limited.

Other gaps include:

- Vaccination programs under-executing budget, affecting effective coverage.

References: 1. Pan American Health Organization (PAHO).(2024). Immunization. Accessed online on April 21st, 2025 from: https://www.paho.org/en/topics/immunization. **2.** Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). (2025). Vaccination Week in the Americas (VWA). Accessed online on April 21st, 2025 from: https://www.paho.org/en/vaccination-week-americas

Vaccination for respiratory diseases in the Americas

WHAT CAN BE DONE

The role of stakeholders, including governments, healthcare providers, patient organizations, professional medical societies, and civil society, is to coordinate actions and implement inclusive strategies that address gaps in vaccination coverage and ensure more equitable and effective vaccination efforts across the region.

Strengthen the Role of Patient Organizations, Healthcare Providers, a Civil Society at a Regional Level



Regional patient organizations, healthcare providers, and civil society gro can collaborate across countries to create and promote culturally sensitiv information campaigns. These campaigns can help address misconceptio and concerns about vaccines, building public trust throughout the region and ensuring that the needs of different communities are met.



Participate in Regional Decision-Making and Policy Discussions

Governments, healthcare stakeholders, patient organizations, and scientifi communities should join forces at a regional level to engage in legislative a scientific discussions. By sharing knowledge and perspectives, they can influence regional vaccination policies and align strategies to tackle shared health challenges.

Form Regional Collaborations and Alliances



Healthcare providers, patient organizations, civil society organizations (including NGOs), and regional governments should build partnerships to strengthen vaccination efforts. These collaborations can help solve infrastructure problems, like vaccine distribution and access in remote are ensuring that underserved populations across the region are properly vaccinated.



Advocate for Inclusion of Vaccination in Regional Action Plans

Stakeholders across the region should advocate for vaccination to be a pric in health action plans, with special attention to vulnerable groups—like pregnant women, people with NCDs, and the elderly—while also encouragi efforts that go beyond childhood vaccination.

Improve Education and Training Across the Region



Healthcare professionals, community leaders, patient organizations, and regional policymakers can work together to improve education and traini for health workers and community members on vaccination strategies. These efforts should include evidence-based practices and focus on the importance of vaccination for the most vulnerable groups while ensuring regional standards for vaccination training are met.

Prepared by: POLICY WISDOM With the support of: Pfizer With the endorsement: FENAECCD

Pfizer. All rights reserved – Total or partial reproduction is prohibited without the authorization of the rights holder. The creation of the materials in this educational campaign was funded by Pfizer. The information presented here is intended solely for educational, non-commercial purposes and should not be used to diagnose or treat any medical condition, nor does it replace medical consultation. Code: PP-UNP-ARG-1787