

Update from the Pan American Health Organization
National Vaccine Advisory Committee
February 2016

Selected highlights of PAHO's recent work with Member States on immunization-related activities include:

- During PAHO's 54th Directing Council meeting, held in late September, countries approved the Regional Immunization Action Plan (RIAP) as the guiding policy document for immunizations in the Region of the Americas from 2016-2020. The RIAP provides Member States with the rationale, guiding principles, objectives and indicators that will enable the Region to align with Global Vaccine Action Plan. The complete document can be accessed online through PAHO's Governing Bodies webpage.
- PAHO's Immunization and Neglected Diseases Units have together developed a Toolkit for Monitoring the Coverage of Integrated Public Health Interventions. Over the course of 2015, four training workshops on the Toolkit were held, including a national workshop in El Salvador in October and a regional workshop in Roatan, Honduras in November.
- Also in November, the 31st annual meeting of Caribbean EPI Managers was held in Georgetown, Guyana. Seventy-three (73) participants from 24 countries and territories were in attendance, as well as individuals from CARICOM, the Caribbean Public Health Agency and PAHO. The general goal of this meeting was to analyze achievements in immunization in the Caribbean for 2015 and plan activities for 2016, while sharing country experiences.
- In December, during a trip to Brazil, the International Expert Committee (IEC) for Measles and Rubella Elimination accepted evidence that the endemic outbreak of measles in the country had been interrupted. The last case of endemic measles was reported in July 2015, but a full year must pass without cases in order to be able to officially confirm the absence of endemic measles. The IEC expects to be able to declare that the entire Region of the Americas has eliminated endemic measles in 2016, which would follow the declaration of the elimination of endemic rubella and CRS in April 2015.

Selected upcoming activities:

- OPV-using countries in the Region are preparing for the global switch from tOPV to bOPV, as called for in the Polio Eradication and Endgame Strategic Plan 2013-2018. The switch will occur in the agreed upon two week window from April 17th to May 1st.
- The 14th annual Vaccination Week in the Americas will be held from April 23-30, 2016. The regional slogan will be "Go for the gold! Get vaccinated!" to take advantage of the momentum leading up to the Summer Olympics Games in Brazil.