Guidelines to Strengthen the First Level of Care (FLC)

Within the framework of PHC and Universal Health during the COVID-19 pandemic

Dr. Reynaldo Holder MD, MSc
International PAHO Consultant
Pan American Health Organization PAHO/WHO

30 June, 2020
PRIMARY HEALTH CARE BASED HEALTH SYSTEMS & UNIVERSAL HEALTH

DETERMINANTS

- SOCIAL EXCLUSION
- INEQUITY
- INEQUALITY

PROMOTE HEALTH

- HEALTHY PUBLIC POLICIES
- HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT
- COMMUNITY ACTION
- SELF CARE
- REORGANIZATION OF HEALTH SERVICES

WELLNESS

QUALITY OF LIFE

HEALTH

PAHO
Pan American Health Organization
World Health Organization
Regional Office for the Americas
PRIMARY HEALTH CARE SYSTEM: Integrated approach to health

Health Promotion

Social Protection

Determinants of Health

Health in All Policies

Universal Health

PHC
RESPONSE TO THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF COVID-19: MULTISECTORIAL COORDINATION

- Environment
- Trade
- Justice
- Public Works
- Security
- Education
- Health
- Housing
- Labor
Recommendations for Health Service Networks in response to outbreaks and epidemics COVID-19

What are we facing?

Pandemic

- Event of large magnitude and significance
- Consumer of large amounts of resources
- Affects the performance of the entire health system and society

1. Increased demand for healthcare services
2. Limited or insufficient resources
3. High social and political pressure
4. Increased mortality

PAHO Pan American Health Organization | World Health Organization Americas
Recommendations for Health Service Networks in response to outbreaks and epidemics COVID-19

SOCIAL IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

What are we facing?

Social Containment Measures vs. Social Impact over the Pandemic Period (Time)
Save Lives

Responding to demand

Depends on leadership and response capacity of the entire health system, the organization of all levels of the health services, and the involvement and organization of social all actors.

Controlling transmission

First level of care

- Public awareness and Prevention
- Identification of cases
- Case management of ambulatory care
- Public Health measures

Management of severe cases

Hospitals

- Care for critical conditions
- Public Health containment
Focus of the response

Comprehensive and participatory approach:
- Health services, community organizations and intersectoral actors
- Public Health, health promotion, prevention, appropriate care.

Integrated approach:
- All levels of health services in integrated manner.
- Public and private (Steering role of the NHA)
- Rational, efficient and integrated use of all the resources of the national health system
• Strengthen the resolutive capacity of the first level of care to respond to COVID-19 and guarantee the continuity of essential services.

• Maintain a balance between the resources allocated to the first level of care and to hospital services and mobile hospitals.

• Expand and maintain services to provide care for the poor, rural and indigenous peri-urban areas.

---

**HEALTH TEAMS**
- Identification and monitoring of symptomatic respiratory cases
- Maternal Care
- Health care and prevention programs for at-risk groups and vulnerable peoples.
- Attention of morbidity of other conditions.

**REINFORCED FIRST LEVEL OF CARE FACILITIES**
- Identification and monitoring of COVID-19 cases
- Maternal Care
- Health care and prevention programs for at-risk groups and vulnerable peoples.
- Care of chronic conditions and other morbidities.
- Emergencies

**SPECIALIZED FACILITIES AT THE FIRST LEVEL OF CARE**
- Identification and monitoring of COVID-19 cases
- Obstetric care and delivery services
- Health care and prevention programs for at-risk groups and vulnerable peoples.
- Specialized care and treatment of chronic conditions and other morbidities.
- 24/7 urgent care

**ENABLING RESOURCES**
- EPP
- Separate care environments
- Masks for patients
- Oximeters, digital thermometers, etc.
- Mobile communication devices
- Call center 911 and ambulances

---

**PAHO** Pan American Health Organization World Health Organization
RECOMENDATIONS

1. Reorganization and strengthening of the response capacity at the first level of care.
2. Centralized bed management.
4. Separate flows for triage, care, and diagnostic testing of patients with respiratory symptoms compatible with suspected COVID-19.
5. Retrofitting, certification, and added complexity for beds, according to clinical risk and nursing care needs.
6. Strengthening of home hospitalization, with or without telehealth.
7. Coordination with prehospital health care services network (emergency care and transportation, ambulances).
8. Networking of clinical management for continuity of care and efficient use of hospital resources.
9. Reorganization, recruitment, and training of personnel, with emphasis on safety and personal protection.
10. Strengthened supply chain.

PURPOSE

offer recommendations to strengthen the response of the health services in order to save lives and ensure effective response capacity through the reorganization and progressive expansion of services in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.
## Framework for the response of Integrated Health Service Delivery Networks to COVID-19

### INTERIM DOCUMENT, MAY 11, 2020

**Health Services and Access Unit**

**PAHO**

### Integrated Health Service Networks Interventions in response to a COVID-19 outbreak

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Attributes (adapted for COVID-19 Outbreaks)</th>
<th>Essential Actions</th>
<th>Interventions</th>
<th>Tools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Definition of the population and territory: Identification of population groups most at risk based on epidemiological criteria of the COVID-19 outbreak.</td>
<td>- Identification of population groups most at risk: Older adults (60 years old and over), patients with chronic diseases, populations living temporarily or permanently in institutions (prose, nursing homes, children's homes).&lt;br&gt;- People in conditions of vulnerability (overcrowded, some disabilities, older adults living alone, caregivers of patients).&lt;br&gt;- Define risk stratification and prioritization mechanisms based on responsiveness and according to priority criteria.&lt;br&gt;- Population mapping using epidemiological risk criteria and according to priority criteria.&lt;br&gt;- Verify participation of first level of care teams in the identification of population groups at risk.&lt;br&gt;- Literally information and health education actions.&lt;br&gt;- Monitor activities of risk groups. Develop a home or institutional visiting program.&lt;br&gt;- Monitoring and control of the visiting program. Outpatient care programming based on priority criteria.</td>
<td>- Operational considerations <a href="https://www.who.int/publications-detail/opertational-considerations-for-managing-c19-outbreaks">https://www.who.int/publications-detail/opertational-considerations-for-managing-c19-outbreaks</a>&lt;br&gt;- Laboratory testing in suspected human cases <a href="https://www.who.int/publications-detail/laboratory-testing-for-2019-novel-coronavirus-novel-coronavirus-2019-nocorona">https://www.who.int/publications-detail/laboratory-testing-for-2019-novel-coronavirus-novel-coronavirus-2019-nocorona</a></td>
<td>- IMC COVID-19 tool</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IHSN AND COMMUNITY, SOCIAL AND INTERSECTORAL COORDINATION**

### Figure 1: Core Values, Principles and Elements in a PBC-Based Health System

- Universal coverage and access
- First Contact
- Universal health care
- Equity
- Solidarity
- Right to the highest attainable level of health
- Health policy, legal & institutional framework
- Active participation mechanisms
- Community groups
- Family
- Person
- Primary Care Services
- Specialized Care
- Community, Social and Intersectoral Coordination
- Sectoral Public Institutions
- Universities and Research Centers
- Countries and Municipalities Institutions
THE ROLE OF THE FIRST LEVEL OF CARE DURING COVID-19

Functions

During the period of sustained community transmission, the first level of care has three functions:


3. FLC measures in reducing the demand on hospitals to increase the capacity of hospital-based services in response to COVID-19.
Provide the technological resources to the first level of care for the effective implementation of new modalities of care,

Ensure mechanisms for effective coordination, communication and linkages throughout the service network to ensure response to the health care needs of the population.

Ensure that health workers at the first level of care have safe conditions, the necessary protections, care for their needs and incentives to provide service to communities and vulnerable populations.
BRING THE SMILES BACK!