

# Chronic Disease Prevention & Control in the Americas



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## Spotlight PAHO To Consider CNCD Resolutions



Chronic noncommunicable diseases (CNCDs) were a hot topic at the [142nd Session of the PAHO](#)

[Executive Committee](#) at PAHO

headquarters in Washington, DC, 23–27 June 2008.



The committee is composed of a subset of Member States who help set the agenda and finalize the working documents for the PAHO Directing Council in September. Both meetings are important fora for discussing and formulating health policy in the PAHO Region. The following countries served on this year's Executive Committee: Antigua & Barbuda, Bolivia, Chile, Mexico, Panama, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago, the United States, and Uruguay, with Canada and Venezuela participating as observers.

Several of the policy documents and resolutions reviewed by the committee addressed issues related to the prevention and control of CNCDs. Among them were:

- ➔ *Population and Individual Approaches to the Prevention and Management of Diabetes and Obesity* ([CE142/9](#)).
- ➔ *Regional Strategy and Plan of Action for Cervical Cancer Prevention and Control* ([CE142/10](#)).
- ➔ *WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control: Opportunities and Challenges for its Implementation in the Americas* ([CE142/23](#)).

In addition, two other regional strategies reviewed by the committee recognized the impact of chronic diseases on the health of younger and older people, and the importance of physical activity:

- ➔ *The Regional Strategy for Adolescent and Youth Health* ([CE142/13, Rev. 1](#)) cited the importance of “mental health, tobacco use, substance abuse, obesity, and chronic illnesses (p. 4).”



- ➔ *Health of Older Persons, including Active and Healthy Aging: Regional Strategy* ([CE142/14](#)) proposed, among its strategic lines of action for 2008–2013, to “promote active aging throughout the life cycle and through a strategy for the integration of healthy environments and personal behaviors. At the same time, strengthen the prevention and management of chronic diseases and other health problems of older persons through self-care and comprehensive programs adapted to their needs” (p. 8).

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## Partners' Forum "12 x 2012"

Among the highlights of this year's PAHO Directing Council meeting (29 September to 3 October 2008) will be the launch of the new "12 x 2012" *Partner's Forum for the Prevention and Control of Chronic Diseases*. Mandated by last year's Directing Council as part of the [Regional Strategy for Chronic Disease Prevention and Control, Including Diet, Physical Activity and Health](#), the Partner's Forum will bring together public and private sector and civil society actors involved in the prevention and control of chronic noncommunicable diseases (CNCDs).



### Purpose of the Partners' Forum

The Partners' Forum will be **action-oriented** and focused on "12 x 2012" key objectives that address underlying risk factors of chronic diseases by making the **healthy choice the easier choice**. PAHO will **convene** key stakeholders and influentials and act as a **catalyst** to create synergy among private sector market forces, government policies, and civil society action to reach "tipping points" that will produce favorable health and wellness outcomes in the Region.

### Goals

1. Greatly increase awareness at all levels about CNCDs and policies and interventions for their prevention and control, as well as risk factor reduction and the social determinants.
2. Create synergy for promoting health and for prevention and management of chronic diseases, risk factors, and their determinants, through evidence-informed action.
3. Mobilize resources and additional partners to support these efforts and to catalyze the formation of similar partnerships at all levels: local, national, and subregional.

### Proposed Objectives

Each set of objectives will be decided on by a cluster of public, private, and civil society partners, based on the strength of the science,



feasibility, and costs. A Technical Advisory Group will provide scientific guidance. Areas of action will be:

- Awareness and communication
- Healthy diet
- Physical activity
- Smoking cessation
- Workplace interventions
- Access to health services
- Training, research, monitoring, and evaluation.



### Makeup and Role of the Partners' Forum

The Partners' Forum (PF) will have a core group/steering committee appointed by PAHO Director Mirta Roses and will hold its first meeting in Washington, DC, to discuss and further develop the objectives for 12 x 2012. The core group will reflect the public-private-civil society composition of the PF, strategize on how to achieve the objectives, and promote the forum to its various constituents.

Thereafter, the PF will hold a general meeting with partners clustering around specific objectives. Partners will be able to contribute to the PF by sharing successful practices, profiling and scaling up existing programs, and contributing in cash or kind to the creation of new programs



for the prevention of chronic diseases through the 12 x 2012 objectives. Subsequently, the PF will hold two meetings annually: one with the core group, and the other to include partners and stakeholders for each of the objectives. Both annual meetings will be important media events. An inclusive brand image/logo will be used to provide recognition of an event or program sponsored by the PF that will showcase the contributions made by partner organizations.

The initial Partners' Forum Secretariat will be the PAHO Chronic Disease team. PAHO will fund certain seed actions, and a fund is being established in collaboration with the Pan American Health and Education Foundation ([PAHEF](#)), which will support the work of the PF and key actions to achieve the objectives. Partners may contribute to the fund or, for example, establish a staff secondment to perform the development officer functions needed for the PF.

## Key CNCDEvents

### Global Vaccine Alliance Supports Introduction of HPV Vaccine

The *Global Alliance for Vaccine Introduction* ([GAVI](#)) has agreed to consider human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine for its new investment strategy.



The GAVI Alliance Board of Directors has approved a plan that will prioritize their future support for HPV vaccines, along with six other vaccine candidates. Over the coming months, the GAVI Alliance—which already offers countries support for the delivery of vaccines against hepatitis B, *Haemophilus influenzae* (Hib), yellow fever, rotavirus, and pneumococcal disease—will assess the priority vaccines, including HPV vaccines, relative to country demand, as well as resource and vaccine



availability. The alliance board will meet later this year to take decisions on GAVI's financial commitment and implementation of this strategy.



The GAVI Alliance began in 2000 and is composed of the world's top global health agencies (including WHO), governments, and private partners. They have increased access to immunization for 176 million children, resulting in an estimated 2.9 million lives saved.

### Jamaica: Prime Minister Golding Underscores Commitment to Caribbean Wellness

Jamaica's prime minister, the Hon. Bruce Golding, (see photo to right), urged stakeholders in health 25 June 2008, to ensure effective implementation of the [Port-of-Spain Declaration: United to Stop the Epidemic of Chronic NCDs](#), in which Caribbean Community ([CARICOM](#)) heads of government pledged in September 2007 to arrest the epidemic of chronic noncommunicable diseases (CNCDs). Mr. Golding was the



Jamaica's prime minister, Bruce Golding, addressing the CNCD policy dialogue in Kingston, Jamaica. Seated alongside is Mr. Ruyard Spencer, minister of health and environment.

keynote speaker at a June 2008 *National Policy Dialogue on NCD Prevention and Control* in Kingston, Jamaica, organized by the [Ministry of Health and Environment of Jamaica](#) and PAHO/WHO.

The chairperson of the meeting, Dr. Sheila Campbell-Forrester (photo to right), chief medical officer in the Ministry of Health and Environment, had previously noted that Golding's first overseas engagement as prime minister was his attendance at the Port-of-Spain summit.



*Dr. Sheila Campbell-Forrester, chief medical officer, Ministry of Health and Environment, Jamaica.  
Photo: World Bank*

In response, the prime minister expressed appreciation of the work of PAHO/WHO, the [CARICOM](#) Secretariat, the United States Agency for International Development ([USAID](#)), and several United Nations agencies for their cooperation in the staging of the anti-CNCD summit. He especially lauded the contribution of Dr. Denzil Douglas, prime minister of St. Kitts, for his performance as the head of government with lead responsibility for health. In addition, he thanked the Ministry of Health and the Environment and the other stakeholders for their post-summit work and for the preparations and arrangements for the dialogue.

"So often," Golding said, "we arrive at these wonderful decisions. It's like New Year's resolutions. But the follow-up is not even within measurable distance of the intentions. And it's important for us to ensure that we achieve the objectives that we have so clearly identified."



*Participants attending sessions at the NCD Policy Dialogue in Jamaica*

Emphasizing the multi-dimensional challenge of CNCDs, the prime minister

told the meeting, "Too often we spend time arguing about whose authority this is. We have to get the entire machinery of government working together, working in a synchronized way."

Golding pointed to the need for a sustained public education campaign to achieve effective transmission of anti-CNCD messages. Citing the inherent creativity of the Jamaican people, he pleaded that, in crafting anti-CNCD messages, "we be at our creative best and let us also employ media of communication to which people respond."

Acknowledging the government's responsibility to create an environment conducive to the promotion of wellness, the prime minister disclosed that he had raised with the minister of health and environment the question of whether or not Jamaica's health delivery system "is as well calibrated as it ought to be."

"Arising out of your deliberations here," he concluded, "let us agree on what is doable. Let us be resolute in terms of what we're going to do, and let us make sure that at every milestone we do an evaluation to ensure that the program is achieving its objectives. Let us get our country and our people to a stage where we don't get sick when we don't have to and where when we get sick we don't die before we have to."



*Dr. Alafia Samuels of the PAHO CNCD team (center), talking with Jamaica's health minister, Rudyard Spencer (left), and the Rev. Al Miller, chairman of Jamaica's Institute of Sports (right).*

The minister of health and environment, the Hon. Rudyard Spencer (photo above right), said that, in carrying out its mandate to lead the policy direction towards a healthier nation, the ministry had to maintain meaningful dialogue with a wide cross-section of society, including health professionals, media, civil society, and all others with a critical interest in chronic diseases. He said that the ministry was preparing plans for a more effective health information system to

monitor the status of chronic diseases in the country. “This is to evolve into a National Chronic Diseases Surveillance System, similar to what we have for the communicable diseases,” he said, adding that it would be part of a network of other systems in the CARICOM region.

Spencer said that the ministry’s aim was to empower individuals and communities to make healthier choices in their everyday lives. He said that healthy zones would be established to facilitate safe and wholesome physical activity, recreation, and social interaction. “We are developing special partnerships with education, the employers’ federation, the unions, and several NGOs to create healthier settings in schools and communities, including the promotion of physical activity at all levels,” he said. “We are looking towards strengthening our collaboration with agriculture in addressing the dietary aspect of the chronic diseases epidemic.”

Spencer also said that consumers’ food choices would need to be addressed through better labeling, testing, and monitoring to ensure compliance and accuracy of labeling. Disclosing that the ministry had revised its guidelines for the screening and management of high blood pressure and diabetes, he paid tribute to the ministry’s international partners—including the Caribbean Food & Nutrition Institute ([CFNI](#)), the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute ([CARDI](#)), the Caribbean Epidemiology Centre ([CAREC](#)), [CARICOM](#), [PAHO/WHO](#), the United States Agency for International Development ([USAID](#)), the United Nations Population Fund ([UNFPA](#)), and the United Nations Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#))—for their assistance in tackling the problem of chronic diseases.

### Activities & Speakers

- *Welcome:* Permanent secretary in the Ministry of Health and Environment, Dr. Grace Allen-Young
- *Prayer:* Reverend Dr. Al Miller (see photo on previous page)
- *PAHO Endorsement of the Dialogue:* PAHO/WHO advisor Dr. Jean Marie Rwangabwoba

- *NCD Situational Analysis for Jamaica—Ministry of Health Epidemiological Survey and Data Analysis:* Dr. Eva Lewis-Fuller, director of Health Promotion and Protection, Ministry of Health and Environment
- *National NCD Policy—Health Promotion & Protection:* Dr. Sonia Copeland, acting director of Disease Prevention and Control, Ministry of Health and Environment
- *The NHF’s Role in Response to the Chronic Noncommunicable Diseases:* Mr. Rae Barrett, chief executive officer, National Health Fund ([NHF](#))



### Caribbean Wellness Day

Dr. Alafia Samuels, of the PAHO CNCD team in Washington (see photo on previous page), outlined plans for the first annual [Caribbean Wellness Day](#), which will be celebrated on Saturday, 13 September 2008. Samuels is coordinating the implementation of the Port-of-Spain Declaration, after highlighting a number of priority issues pertaining to the campaign against CNCDs and reporting on regional activities towards implementation of the Port-of-Spain Declaration.

*Caribbean Wellness Day* was established by the Port-of-Spain summit and will be celebrated on the second Saturday in September each year. The main messages for 2008 will be

- **No tobacco**
- **Exercise 30 minutes per day**
- **Less salt, less fat**
- **Check your blood pressure.**



**Use less!**



For additional information on this event, contact [Clare Forrester](#), Tel. (876) 970-4250 or (876) 331-8992.

- Source: Gayle Gollop, PAHO Chronic Disease Team.
- Photos: Jamaica Information Service ([JIS](#)).

## Did you know?

### CARMEN Policy Observatory

The CARMEN Policy Observatory is a joint initiative between PAHO and the PAHO/WHO Collaborating Center on Noncommunicable Disease (NCD) Policy, located within the Public Health Agency of Canada ([PHAC](#)). The observatory is a platform for the network of American countries and institutions engaged in the systematic analysis and monitoring of chronic noncommunicable disease (CNCD) policies. [CARMEN](#) is the initiative adopted by PAHO for CNCD prevention in the Americas.



The observatory's overall **purpose** is to provide a knowledge base and analytical support to policymakers in the Americas and potentially to countries in other regions. Its specific **objectives** are to:

- Support the development of effective integrated CNCD prevention policies through the systematic analysis of the processes involved in formulation, approval, and implementation of such policies
- Strengthen multisectorial collaboration in the adoption of complementary policies that maximize CNCD prevention
- Place CNCD prevention higher on the agenda of policymakers.

The CARMEN Policy Observatory will open up opportunities for training, research, and monitoring and serve as a dissemination point for best practices in policy by focusing on legislation, regulation, public policies, and international health policy.

For more information see the [fact sheet](#), the [CARMEN page](#), or the PHAC site devoted to the [CARMEN Observatory on CNCD Policy](#).

Source and contact person: [Dr. Branka Legetic, PAHO](#).

STOP THE GLOBAL EPIDEMIC OF CHRONIC DISEASE

PROMOTE. PREVENT. TREAT. CARE



### Integrated Chronic Disease Prevention & Control in the Americas



The PAHO/WHO Chronic Disease Program invites the readers of this newsletter to submit contributions on activities related to chronic disease in the Americas. Send contributions (1-3 paragraphs) to Dr. James Hospedales ([hospedaj@paho.org](mailto:hospedaj@paho.org)) with copy to Pilar Fano ([fanopili@paho.org](mailto:fanopili@paho.org)) and Suzanna Stephens ([stephens@paho.org](mailto:stephens@paho.org)). Letters to the Editor should be addressed to Silvana Luciani ([lucianis@paho.org](mailto:lucianis@paho.org)). Instructions and criteria can be found on the homepage for this newsletter at the web link below: