

Regional Conference on Migration (RCM) Migration Health in the Americas Workshop

San Jose, Costa Rica, August 10-11, 2022

Concept Note

Context and justification:

Recent trends in migration movements and responses have much in common across the Americas, from mass arrivals across land borders to stricter border measures, harmonization of travel data and documents, and efforts to integrate arrivals. A significant challenge for all countries has been adapting and resourcing to respond to the health needs and impacts of migrants along their journey and at places of transit and destination. Most recently, the Covid-19 pandemic raised an urgent need to contain international health risks impacting travel, screening and labour mobility

High level efforts at cooperation to address both large cross-border movements and infectious disease outbreaks, most recently the Covid-19 pandemic, have brought together ministers and mobilized funds, but there have been limited opportunities for direct exchanges of information and expertise at the technical level across the region. The Regional Conference on Migration (RCM), with its recent experience hosting successful migration health workshops and its developing links to the South American Conference on Migration (SACM), is uniquely positioned to convene migration officials and health experts to provide a unique forum for mutual learning that can help inform local responses at the program and policy development level.

RCM, Caribbean and South American countries have been facing large cross-border movements and a growing incidence of disease outbreaks, learning in the process how to facilitate basic health services and continuity of care to migrant populations, address needs of vulnerable groups and front-line workers, identify mental health needs, and respond to rapid changes. Discussing the challenges and lessons learned from each country's experiences would inform and help improve migration-related responses to health issues across the Americas.

Background:

The Viceministers at the XXIV RCM held 13-14 November 2019 in Guatemala decided as follows:

5. *Approve the following activities, and invite the Member States to participate actively in them:*

(...)



- e. *A Workshop on Migration Health in the Americas, in May or June 2020, in Costa Rica, with the support of Canada and the United States, and technical support from the ICRC, IOM and UNODC.*

Due to the Covid-19 emergency, the event required postponement, and is now being included in the workplan of the Presidency Pro-Témpore of El Salvador. The Workshop will gather experts from the RCM Member States and its observer organizations, as well as other countries of the Americas, with the goal of exchanging information on policies, programs, best practices and lessons learned. The two-day event is expected to cover the following themes:

- Outbreak preparedness and responses, including experiences and lessons learned from Covid-19 responses
- Regional and country responses to address health issues related to mass cross-border movements
- Health and border measures
- Migrant workers and health
- Mental health in migrant populations, refugees and front-line personnel
- Forward-looking migration health considerations and priorities

The RCM Viceministers' agreement included a commitment to reach out to the SACM to seek their participation. Costa Rica offered to co-sponsor the event with Canada and host the event, and the United States offered funding to ensure Caribbean participation. Support and participation by Member Countries and international organizations is also sought to ensure attendance by their representatives and of those from other RCM, Caribbean Migration Consultations (CMC) and SACM countries.

General objective:

Provide countries in the Americas with knowledge that can help develop and implement public policies on migration health, with a comprehensive discussion of subjects and experiences stemming from the hemisphere's migration movements.

Specific objectives:

1. Exchange migration health information and best practices.
2. Update knowledge of strategies and responses for disease outbreaks, including experiences and lessons learned from responses to the pandemic.
3. Improve health interventions related to cross-border movements.
4. Provide knowledge for development and improvement of mental health programs for migrants, refugees and front-line workers.





Conferencia Regional sobre Migración
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Participant profile:

- A minimum of two representatives from each participating country (at the technical level; i.e., branch or program director) from the areas of health and migration of the corresponding government institutions, such as:
 - Foreign Affairs ministries (consular departments, migration, overseas citizen support)
 - Health ministries or agencies, and institutions or areas involved in occupational and mental health
 - Migration departments or directorates
- Three representatives from civil society, affiliated to the Regional Network of Civil Society Organizations on Migration (RNCOM).

RCM observer organizations are encouraged and welcome to participate.

Logistics:

The organizers will cover the costs of lodging and return travel to the city of San José up to a maximum of two participants from each RCM Member Country from Mexico, Central America and the Dominican Republic. The organizers will also cover the cost of lunches and supplies needed throughout the days of the Workshop.

The RCM Executive Secretariat will provide participants with a Logistical Guide for the Workshop, with information on the venue, lodging and transportation, among other.

