WHO VALIDATES ELIMINATION OF MOTHER-TO-CHILD TRANSMISSION OF HIV AND SYPHILIS IN CUBA

30 JUNE 2015 ¦ GENEVA ¦ WASHINGTON - Cuba today became the first country in the world to receive validation from WHO that it has eliminated mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis.

“Accurate and timely health data are the foundation to improving public health. Without reliable information to set priorities and measure results, countries and their development partners are working in the dark,” said Margaret Chan, Director-General of WHO. “Investing in measurement is an investment in health and countries that build and strengthen local capacity are better positioned to achieve greater long-term success and better health outcomes.

Dozens of global health leaders from governments, multilaterals, academia, research institutions and civil society will endorse The Roadmap for Health Measurement and Accountability and a 5-Point Call to Action, which outline a shared strategic approach and priority actions and targets that countries and development partners can use to put effective health monitoring plans in place to strengthen health information systems.

“If we are going to ensure that people everywhere have access to quality health care, and that no one is impoverished paying for the health care they need, we need to invest in high-quality, timely, and accurate data and statistics so that countries can measure and monitor their progress,” said Jim Yong Kim, President of the World Bank Group. “Today’s investments in country health information systems will lead to a better tomorrow for billions of people.”

Supporting countries to achieve their health-related Sustainable Development Goals over the next 15 years and aligning partner and donors around common priorities are at the center of the Roadmap and 5-Point Call to Action.

“With the end of the Millennium Development Goals and advent of the Sustainable Development Goals, we are at a key moment to shape the future of international development—and that includes improving health,” said Alfonso Lenhardt, Acting Administrator of USAID. “Countries need to build and further strengthen their capacity in health so they can meet the growing demands for reliable and timely data required for effective measurement of health programs.”

The Roadmap outlines smart investments and proposes concrete actions and targets that countries can adopt to build local capacities, including strengthening basic measurement systems essential to successfully planning, managing and measuring their health programs. The 5-Point Call to Action provides concrete targets for increasing investments, strengthening institutional capacity, using data more effectively, sharing and standardizing data openly, and promoting accountability and transparency.
Panelists at the summit will represent a broad array of high-level global health leaders, country representatives and development partners, and will discuss issues related to building country capacity and demand for health data, including topics such as data revolution and the importance of country and global accountability.


NEW REPORT SHOWS THAT 400 MILLION DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL HEALTH SERVICES

12 JUNE 2015 | GENEVA | NEW YORK CITY - A WHO and World Bank Group report launched today shows that 400 million people do not have access to essential health services and 6% of people in low- and middle-income countries are tipped into or pushed further into extreme poverty because of health spending.

“This report is a wakeup call: It shows that we’re a long way from achieving universal health coverage. We must expand access to health and protect the poorest from health expenses that are causing them severe financial hardship,” says Dr Tim Evans, Senior Director of Health, Nutrition and Population at the World Bank Group.

Tracking universal health coverage: First global monitoring report

The report, Tracking Universal Health Coverage, is the first of its kind to measure health service coverage and financial protection to assess countries’ progress towards universal health coverage.

The report looked at global access to essential health services - including family planning, antenatal care, skilled birth attendance, child immunization, antiretroviral therapy, tuberculosis treatment, and access to clean water and sanitation - in 2013, and found that at least 400 million people lacked access to at least one of these services.

“The world’s most disadvantaged people are missing out on even the most basic services,” says Dr Marie-Paule Kieny, Assistant Director-General, Health Systems and Innovation, at the World Health Organization. “A commitment to equity is at the heart of universal health coverage. Health policies and programmes should focus on providing quality health services for the poorest people, women and children, people living in rural areas and those from minority groups”.

The report also found that, across 37 countries, 6% of the population was tipped or pushed further into extreme poverty ($1.25/day) because they had to pay for health services out of their own pockets. When the study factored in a poverty measure of $2/day, 17% of people in these countries were impoverished, or further impoverished, by health expenses.

“These high levels of impoverishment, which happen when poor people have to pay out of pocket for their own emergency health care, pose a major threat to the goal of eliminating extreme poverty,” says Dr Kaushik Basu, Senior Vice President and Chief Economist at the World Bank Group. “As we transition to a post-2015 development era, we must act on these findings, or the world’s poor risk being left behind.”
WHO News Release

WHO and the World Bank Group recommend that countries pursuing universal health coverage should aim to achieve a minimum of 80% population coverage of essential health services, and that everyone everywhere should be protected from catastrophic and impoverishing health payments.

“As more countries make commitments to universal health coverage, one of the major challenges they face is how to track progress,” says Dr Ties Boerma, Director of the Department of Health Statistics and Information Systems at the World Health Organization. “The report shows that it is possible to quantify universal health coverage and track progress towards its key goals, both in terms of health services and financial protection coverage.”

This is the first in a series of annual reports that WHO and the World Bank Group will produce on tracking progress towards UHC across countries.

“As the saying goes, ‘what gets measured, gets done.’ With countries around the world taking steps to provide universal health coverage, the ability to identify gaps and effectively measure progress will add critical momentum to this global movement,” says Michael Myers, Managing Director at The Rockefeller Foundation. “This an important tool for countries to achieve universal health coverage and build more resilient health systems.”


SUPPLEMENTS

* Supplements will be considered for work including proceedings of conferences or subject matter covering an important topic.

* Material can be in the form of original work or abstracts.

* Material in supplements will be for the purpose of teaching rather than research.

* The Guest Editor will ensure that the financial cost of production of the supplement is covered.

* Supplements will be distributed with the regular issue of the journal but further copies can be ordered upon request.

* Material will be made available on the Neurosciences website (www.neurosciencesjournal.org)