

42nd MEETING OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HEALTH RESEARCH (ACHR)

RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL, 13 TO 15 APRIL, 2008

**EVIPNet: Evidence-Informed Policy Networks.
Progress Report**

EVIPNET AMERICAS: PROGRESS REPORT¹

- A group of experts completed the review of the Applications of Intent (AOI) of Paraguay, Trinidad and Tobago and Mexico. The recommendations for strengthening these proposals were channeled through PAHO's country office. We expect to receive the revised proposals by the end of the month.
- Costa Rica and Bolivia have submitted their AOIs and they were sent out for review by the expert committee.
- Chile has informed us that they expect to submit their Letter of Intent and their AOIs in the near future. It is worth noting that Chile has chosen an innovative mechanism to produce the AOI by calling for proposals to be funded by the National Fund for Research and Development for Health (FONIS for its name in Spanish, Fondo Nacional de Investigación y Desarrollo en Salud) .
- We held a series of virtual meetings that have included representatives from the Ministry of Health, PAHO's country office and Research Promotion and Development team to help advance EVIPNet Brazil. Brazil has expressed that they intend to move forward with the project in the short term.
- A network of academic institutions has submitted a proposal that fits EVIPNet Colombia's goals and could serve as the foundation for the project in that country. The Minister of Social Protection, Dr. Manuel Gutierrez, has agreed on the benefits of this approach, and Dr. Conrado Gómez was chosen as the person who can help move the project forward. Dr. Roberto Sempertegui and Dr. Roberto Alfaro (PAHO/WHO Colombia) are facilitating the process.
- Thanks to the advocacy carried out by our field office in El Paso, Texas (FEP), the US-Mexico Border Health Commission has included EVIPNet in its working plan. This plan guides health activities at the border and it is signed jointly by health authorities of the United States and Mexico.
- Argentina, El Salvador and Ecuador have joined the list of countries that plan to start participating in EVIPNet in this new biennium. (See also RIMAIS, below)

Ibero-American Ministerial Network for Health Education and Research (RIMAIS)

- This recently created network brings together ministries of health from several ibero-american countries with the goal of promoting health education and research. During its first meeting in San José de Costa Rica, March 4-6, 2008, the ministries representatives approved a strategic plan that takes EVIPNet main goals and supports its implementation in member countries. Representatives from the national health Authorities from Brazil,

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Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Spain, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Dominican Republic, Uruguay and Venezuela participated in the meeting.

- Dr Analía Porrás, THR/RC, is a member of the RIMAIS Technical Advisory Committee and facilitated the research working group that drafted a research action plan for the network. The following points in the working plan are of interest to EVIPNet:
 - To promote the use of the outputs produced by EVIPNet teams to inform policy making by:
 - To gather information about different initiatives to promote the use of evidence in policy making in RIMAIS member countries
 - To raise awareness among decision makers in member countries of the importance and advantages of evidence informed decisions
 - To validate and adopt a standard format for Policy Briefs that can facilitate translating evidence into policy and the exchange of information between member countries
 - To validate and promote the Skills Building Strategy that PAHO is developing for improving the use of evidence in decision making
- We were able to discuss EVIPNet with participating countries. This was particularly useful in the case of El Salvador y Ecuador who are planning to launch EVIPNet during this Biennium.

Skills-Building Strategy

- The 41st ACHR (Advisory Committee on Health Research) session approved a proposal to develop a comprehensive Skills-Building Strategy (SB)
- Dr. Analía Porrás, Research Promotion and Development (THR/RC) and Dr. Rosa María Borrell, Human Resources Development (HSS/HR) collaborated in drafting a proposal for the development and implementation of the SB (see attached draft). In order to validate and strengthen this proposal, RC plans to organize a workshop that will include a group of experts in the field.
- The proposed plan contemplates using on-site, virtual and mixed approaches. Virtual courses would be offered through PAHO's VIRTUAL CAMPUS (VC) and information about training opportunities would be available both through the VC and the EVIDENCE portal. Therefore, developing and implementing the SB will involve a collaborative effort between THR/RC, HSS/HR and BIREME and would also require input from the expert's advisory group.
- We are in the process of submitting several applications to help fund this initiative.