



PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION



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PREPARATIONS FOR THE CENTENNIAL OF THE PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION

1. Introduction

The Pan American Health Organization will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2002. In honor of the event, a yearlong series of activities are planned at the national and regional levels. Following consultations with the Member States in 2000, the focus of the centennial was determined to be the work that the Member States and the Secretariat have done together over the past century and a recommitment to greater awareness and concern for public health during the next 100 years. The hallmark of all the celebrations is inclusion, not only among individuals in the Americas but globally.

2. Regional Plans

The centennial of the world's oldest ongoing public health agency will kick off in January 2002 with a news conference and a call for entries in contests planned for children, adolescents, and professional journalists. The winners of the national contests will compete in the regional contests. An 18-member Centennial Advisory Board has been created and is comprised of internationally recognized individuals representing the Hemisphere. A poster and logo selected by the staff and a planned Centennial Web Page that will include a range of information, from historical background to current plans and events, will help promote the centennial.

During the year, several regional meetings will highlight 100 years of the Pan American Health Organization, including those focusing on health promotion, research, bioethics, vaccines, and water quality. Media kits, a special edition of the magazine *Perspectives in Health*, and a short video will deal with different aspects of the century as

well as the future of public health. In addition, a series of 15 one-minute videos and a variety of radio spots will be produced and distributed regionally. Various exhibits will be created and shown at such events as the World Health Assembly and the Pan American Sanitary Conference.

World Health Day, 7 April 2002, with a focus on fitness, is another opportunity to highlight the centennial. During the Pan American Sanitary Conference in September, the regional award for the journalism contest will be presented. There also will be a special launch of *Health in the Americas* and the Director's *Quadrennial Report*. A commemorative centennial photo book will highlight 100 years of international public health in captioned images.

As a grand show of Pan Americanism, all the countries in the Americas are asked to plan one special event on the same day, 2 December 2002, which is the actual birthday of the Organization. In Washington, the Regional Public Health Heroes will be honored at a black tie dinner at the Willard Intercontinental Hotel, the site of the founding of PAHO 100 years ago.

3. Country Plans

There are many common elements among the plans that have been submitted. Each of the countries was asked to create a National Committee that includes various sectors of society and to plan events and select Champions of Health (noted public figures) as well as Public Health Heroes, who are defined as those who have made extraordinary contributions to public health.

Many of the countries now have active National Committees that are working to develop and implement their centennial plans. Several countries will publish histories of the Organization and its accomplishments in collaboration with the ministries of health and other national entities. Almost half of the countries are planning to issue commemorative stamps in honor of the centennial. The countries are making plans to participate in the poster, essay, and journalism contests that will be announced in January 2002. Multimedia campaigns are being planned to include the Internet, print, TV, and radio.

Other activities will include walks for health or other charitable acts, special recognitions, centennial Web pages, presentations of special national distinctions to the Organization and its Director, special sporting events, special meetings and conferences, cultural events, photo exhibits, and issuing commemorative lottery tickets and coins. All countries are planning special activities for 2 December that range from solemn public ceremonies to educational symposia and high profile social events.

4. Ongoing Activities

The Secretariat will continue to plan and implement centennial activities and events and will produce and distribute media and promotional materials in preparation for the launch of centennial celebrations in January 2002. Plans from the Member States will continue to be updated and information circulated through the Organization's Intranet site, and regular centennial updates will be sent to each PAHO Country Office.

5. Action by the Directing Council

The Directing Council is asked to take note of the report and make additional commitments for the centennial. Excitement is growing in anticipation of the centennial year, and we envision that this will foster additional support for a renewed commitment to public health in the 21st century.