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Country: Guyana

Institution: Indian School Al Ghubra

Topic: Providing Stable Medical supplies to regions in need

“Providing entire population with quality, accessible, and equitable medical services so that they can be among the healthiest in the Caribbean, through an IHSDN approach. “ – Daniel Albrecht, Advisor, Health Systems and Services, PAHO

Guyana spreads across 83,000 square miles, in which 90% of the population resides in coastal areas and the remaining 10% in the hinterland regions, where the topography of the land makes it hard to pass through, posing a barrier to access healthcare. In Guyana, majority of the people who do not currently have access to healthcare are marginalized or are in situations of vulnerability. Therefore, emphasis must be placed on tackling the determinants of health which underpin vulnerability, and on community-based services to ensure equitable access to good quality health services among remote and marginalized populations.

PAHO/WHO's proactive approach towards COVID-19 in Guyana is evident through their early initiation of awareness campaigns months before the first case, collaborating with the Ministry of Health to disseminate information and educate the public. Their efforts extended to hosting webinars with journalists and specialists to promote responsible reporting and combat misinformation, despite challenges posed by political situations. Redirecting resources towards the pandemic response, including postponing events like the Annual Media Awards, reflects their prioritization of urgent needs. While the pandemic slowed down the execution of their Biennial Work Plan, PAHO/WHO proposed a health promotion strategy to align with the long-term objectives outlined in Health Vision 2030, demonstrating adaptability and a commitment to supporting public health beyond crises.

PAHO/WHO has been assisting the Ministry of Health to work toward achieving universal health care, as this is one of the pillars in the country’s national health strategy. The strategy uses an Integrated Health Service Delivery Network (IHSDN) approach as one of the principal operational expressions of primary health care-based health systems at the health services level. This helps to make several of its most essential elements a reality, such as universal health coverage and access; first contact, comprehensive, integrated, and continuous care; appropriate care; optimal organization and management; family and community orientation; and intersectoral action, among others.

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