

Primary Health Care: Current and Future Models for the Caribbean

Marvin Reid

The choice of the theme for the 64th annual health research conference of 'Primary Health Care: Current and Future Models for the Caribbean' is timely, as it follows on the renewed commitment at the Global Conference on Primary Health Care in Astana (1) where world leaders and global organizations pledged to develop people-centred Primary Health Care.

Primary Health Care in the region has had a long history and is being positioned as the foundation for not only a health strategy but also as a tool for human and social development, which focusses on people, their families and communities. Within this context, Primary Health Care is embedded in the PAHO's '2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' which encapsulates the developmental goals that have been endorsed by PAHO Member States (2). Additionally, the high-level report on Universal Health in the 21st Century articulates that 'primary health care is a sustainable path to achieving universal health as a right of all people with quality, equity, and social justice, through State policies that guarantee these rights, respect diversity, and have sufficient and equitable economic resources, strengthening communities as a transformational factor, so that no one is left outside the health system' (3). Notwithstanding these principles, there is still global debate on the level and scope of services to be included, the composition of the primary care team, and the financing model to employ.

Thus, this conference represents an opportunity to further the dialogue on some of these issues and should be viewed as a tangible milestone that supports the collective vision and health agenda of the region, by providing a platform

for the distillation of evidence that can contribute to health systems strengthening as well as to our understanding of the implementation constraints, governance, financial and delivery arrangements for primary care, public health and wellness services in the Caribbean. It is envisaged that arising from the deliberations at this conference there will be evidence that can be packaged and incorporated into health and social policies that benefit the peoples of the region.

This year's conference will also feature the launch of CARPHA Clinical Care Guidelines as well as plenary talks on Cancer, Non-communicable Diseases and Capacity Building. Once again, on behalf of the Planning committee, we welcome you as well as our various sponsors to our conference and wish that you will have a productive and rewarding experience.

References

1. World Health Organization. Declaration of Astana: Global Conference on Primary Health Care [Internet]. Astana, Kazakhstan: World Health Organization; 2018. Available from: www.who.int/docs/default-source/primary-health/declaration/gcphc-declaration.pdf.
2. PAHO. Sustainable Health Agenda for the Americas 2018–2030 [Internet]. Washington, DC: PAHO; 2017. Available from: <http://iris.paho.org/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/49170/CSP296-eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.
3. PAHO. Universal Health in the 21st Century: 40 Years of Alma-Ata. Report of the High Level Commission [Internet]. 2019. Available from: http://iris.paho.org/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/50742/9789275120682_eng.pdf?sequence=16.