

Promoting Health Across the Hemisphere

Canada has one of the best health care systems in the world, providing high-quality health care services based on need, not the ability to pay. Canada is working with its Hemispheric neighbours to improve health services in their countries. In fact, dealing with health-related issues cooperatively is in everyone's interests in an era of unprecedented movement of people and goods across borders, when global environmental health issues are of concern to all.

As noted earlier, in March 2002 Canada hosted a meeting of Ministers of Health and Ministers of Environment from across the Hemisphere as a follow-up to the Quebec City Summit Plan of Action. The objective was to foster a new spirit of cooperation, with increased levels of technical support and targeted development assistance.



CIDA Photo: David Trattles

Canada contributes some CD\$25 million per year to Latin American and Caribbean health initiatives that improve basic health care and reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases.

In the Americas, Canada works directly with other countries and also with the Pan American Health Organization to provide Canadian technical and scientific expertise that helps address a wide variety of issues, including HIV/AIDS, tobacco control, Indigenous health problems, improvements in laboratories and health surveillance systems. Among the projects that Canada has developed in coordination with PAHO are the following: a Canada-Costa Rica project on women's health policies; the Latin-American/Caribbean-Canada project on surveillance of anti-microbial resistances; and the Mexico-Canada project on healthy ageing. Canada supports PAHO in its efforts to prevent and control communicable diseases in South America and Haiti. Canada has also signed an agreement with the United States to work more cooperatively on health concerns relating to Indigenous populations.

Canada is involved in community health care projects together with the Canadian Red Cross Society in Honduras and Nicaragua. These strengthen the capacities of local Red Cross societies to assist local ministries of health in delivering primary health care services to people most in need. The Government of Canada also works with the Newfoundland Centre for Nursing Studies, using distance education technology to train new primary health care nurses in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.