

Costa Rica and PHC

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Country profile

- Costa Rica has a population of 5.2 million inhabitants, more than 76% live in urban areas
- GDP per capita of US \$23,287
- 1.2 beds per 1000 inhabitants;
- Life expectancy at birth of 80.5 years (2019)
- Unemployment rate 15.5
- Gini coefficient 0.51

The Costa Health System

- The health system is a single national health system -Caja Costarricense de Seguro Social (CCSS)- developed in 1941
- Twenty years later, it became a universal access model that protects employees including self-employees, and the uninsured.
- It is an integrated buyer-supplier model, financed mainly by from the national budget.
- The Costa Rican health system adopts PHC.
- Introducing PHC began in 1979. In the 1980s, the model of local health systems promoted by PAHO was implemented
- The model was reformed and consolidated in the 90s when community clinics called Basic Comprehensive Health Care Teams (EBAIS) were established, with a family, community and environmental approach.

The Structure

- PHC structure: Basic Comprehensive Health Care Teams (EBAIS), support teams, the community, commissions and working groups
- The PHC system starts from a first level of care with more than 104 health areas and 1041 catchment area, in each of which an EBAIS operates,
 - The EBAIS: Multidisciplinary teams for the provision of health services, each is in charge of a catchment area with a specific number of families (1000 households)
 - Each EBAIS is made up of at least one doctor, one nurse, and one health services assistant.
 - Support teams: may include social workers, dentists, laboratory technicians, pharmacists and nutritionists.
 - The community: development associations, health committees, self-help groups, networks, health boards
 - Commissions and working groups

Regionalization

- The country is divided into administrative regions, according to the regional division of the Ministry of Planning.
- Each Region is divided into Health Areas based on the political-administrative division of the country.
- Each geographic unit has a population of 15,000 to 40,000 in rural areas and 30,000 to 60,000 in urban areas
- Each catchment Area is subdivided into sectors of 3,500 to 4,000 inhabitants.
- The system is organized by levels of care and programs

- The EBAS provide outpatient services, family planning, community medical services, health promotion interventions and disease prevention. It refers patients to higher levels of care as needed.
- The care is carried out in homes, health centers, educational centers, workplaces and in the communities
- The EBAS has started in the most disadvantaged urban and rural areas. Today they cover all territories.
- Now, there are plans to develop Comprehensive Health Care Centers (CHCC) that will integrate EBAS with providers of the second level of care including development of protocols for patients to access services in the areas of psychiatry, pediatrics, elderly care and other specialties.

- During the pandemic, the EBAs were the first line of combat against COVID-19
- They carried out health surveillance, prevention and treatment tasks in individuals, families and communities
- They monitored suspected and confirmed cases without complications at home, including house-to-house visits and remote care
- They organized triage areas at the entrance of health centers to screen COVID-19 patients

A new reform?

- A new reform is promoted under the logic of the PHC
- They suggest the need to adapt PHC to the logic of benefit packages, strategic purchase by risk-adjusted capitation, reform professional training, especially for doctors, emphasizing their specialization in areas of family medicine,
- They promote the development of Comprehensive Health Care Centers (CAIS) with maternity services, intermediate care beds (to avoid hospital admissions), minor surgeries, rehabilitation, specialty clinics (such as palliative care), and diagnostics such as X-rays, telemedicine, and home visits, and by keeping the focus on preventive health care services.