



PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION



27th PAN AMERICAN SANITARY CONFERENCE

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RESOLUTION

CSP27.R14

SAFE HOSPITALS: A REGIONAL INITIATIVE ON DISASTER-RESILIENT HEALTH FACILITIES

THE 27th PAN AMERICAN SANITARY CONFERENCE,

Having considered the report of the Director on *Safe Hospitals: A Regional Initiative on Disaster-resilient Health Facilities* (Document CSP27/12) and aware of the benefit of joining forces to reduce health disaster risk;

Considering that the 45th Directing Council of the Pan American Health Organization (2004) approved Resolution CD45.R8 urging Member States to adopt “Hospitals Safe from Disasters” as a national risk reduction policy and that 168 countries adopted the same goal at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction as one of the priority actions to be implemented by 2015;

Aware that, according to data provided by PAHO/WHO Member States, 67% of their health facilities are located in disaster risk areas and that in the last decade nearly 24 million people in the Americas lost health care for months, and sometimes years, due to damage to health facilities directly related to disasters;

Taking into account that functional collapse is the main cause of hospitals being out of service after a disaster and that access to health services is a critical need in saving lives, especially during emergencies, and is a main responsibility of the health sector and also one of the Essential Public Health Functions;

Considering that the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) decided to organize, for 2008-2009, the global safe hospitals campaign as an example of a complex entity that requires the collaboration of all sectors, including financial institutions, in order to make hospitals resilient to disasters, and that the World Health Organization is the technical entity responsible for the campaign; and

In order to significantly contribute to reducing disaster risk in the Region and taking into account that the safe hospital campaign will make a major contribution to comprehensive hospital safety, including patient safety and health of workers,

RESOLVES:

1. To urge the Member States to:
 - (a) Ensure that a specific entity in each ministry of health has the responsibility to develop a disaster risk reduction program;
 - (b) Actively support the 2008-2009 ISDR safe hospitals campaign through:
 - Establishment of partnerships with stakeholders within and beyond the health sector, such as national disaster management organizations, planning, national and international financial institutions, universities, scientific and research centers, local authorities, communities, and other key contributors;
 - Sharing and implementing best practices in order to achieve practical and significant progress on the safe hospitals initiative at the country level;
 - Encouraging assessment of the existing health facilities and the potential vulnerabilities to disasters, in order to develop long-term plans to eliminate such vulnerabilities;
 - Ensuring that all new hospitals are built with a level of protection that better guarantees that they will remain functional in disaster situations, and implementing appropriate mitigation measures to reinforce existing health facilities;
 - (c) Develop national policies on safe hospitals, adopt appropriate national and international norms and standards, and monitor the safety of the health facility network;

- (d) To promote the inclusion of risk reduction as part of the accreditation process for health facilities.
- 2. To request the Director to:
 - (a) Develop new tools to assess the likelihood that health facilities remain functional during and after a disaster and assist Member States in their implementation;
 - (b) Support countries in documenting and sharing best practices as well as achieving progress on the safe hospital initiative;
 - (c) Promote and strengthen coordination and cooperation with regional and subregional agencies related to the issue of disasters.

(Eighth plenary meeting, 4 October 2007)