



**AS/COA**  
HEALTHCARE SERIES

The logo features the text 'AS/COA' in a large, bold, sans-serif font. 'AS' is green, the slash is blue, and 'COA' is orange. Below it, 'HEALTHCARE SERIES' is written in a smaller, blue, all-caps sans-serif font. The logo is centered within a white rectangular box with a thin grey border. The background of the top half of the page is a light green map of the Americas with a white grid of latitude and longitude lines.

# 2022 ACTIVITIES REPORT



## 2022 ACTIVITIES REPORT: COA HEALTHCARE SERIES

The Council of the Americas' Healthcare series brings together key stakeholders with the goal of informing and shaping the best practices and policies needed to meet the growing demand for access to quality healthcare. Under the co-chairmanship of Hugo Villegas, Senior Vice President & President, Canada & Latin America for Medtronic Inc, and Felicia Knaul, Professor at the Leonard M. Miller School of Medicine, Director of the Institute for Advanced Study of the Americas of the University of Miami, these fora have built a unique space for healthcare experts, government leaders, industry representatives and academics alike to engage in candid, insightful reflection on innovative and sustainable healthcare models.

The aim of the Series, organized by COA Senior Director Steve Liston and Senior Program Associate Maria de Lourdes Despradel, with support from member companies, is to promote public-private cooperation, increase awareness of medical technologies and innovation, encourage regulatory harmonization and collaboration, and share best practices in health financing. The healthcare agenda covers a diverse range of topics including pharmaceuticals, food and beverages, medical devices, healthy living and wellness, technology, financing, and insurance.

As countries came out of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Series has focused on sustainable healthcare systems, the importance of innovation and e-health in providing equitable and efficient care, and the need to re-focus on issues neglected during the pandemic, including mental health, screening, and NCDs.

The Council has hosted a number of panel discussions and private off-the-record meetings with government, private sector, multilateral and other health leaders, under the theme "A Better Healthcare Future for the Americas," which addressed three aspects essential to creating better healthcare future for citizens of the Americas: Sustainable and Equitable Healthcare Systems, Innovating for Healthcare, and Healthcare in the IX Summit of the Americas.



Meeting with Vice President of Ecuador Alfredo Borrero Vega and Ambassador Ivonne Baki

## SIGNATURE PROGRAMS

### *Ensuring Access to Innovations in Healthcare*

(FEBRUARY 2, 2022)

The panel featured speakers from diverse backgrounds who discussed the challenges and benefits of accessing healthcare innovations in Latin America. Hugo Villegas described how the pandemic shifted the focus back to healthcare and enabled positive changes in the industry. Technology is key to democratizing timely access to quality health and a necessary investment for the sustainability of health systems, said Villegas. In addition, Sandra Ligia González, Executive Secretary for the Inter-American Coalition for Regulatory Convergence, emphasized that health authorities have a critical role in accompanying innovation. She added that several countries in the region have come a long way in terms of regulations for this type of collaboration.

The great challenge for governments to allow remote care in Latin America has to do with the fragmentation of health systems (outpatient clinics, primary care, specialists, hospitals, etc.), which means that the patient has to multiply their contact points. contact, versus care that can be comprehensive, said Rubén Gennero Riganti, Director ADP for Hospital Clinico Dra. Eloisa Diaz in La Florida, Chile.

At the end of the day, it's worth taking the risks of innovation for the benefit of the patient, Villegas said. These improvements are particularly important when it comes to facilitating technological adaptation and improving patient experience. What's important is that this risk is quantified and monetized and that everyone is willing to cover it in case things don't work out—and that the payoff is equitable, he added. We would be missing out on a huge opportunity if we went back to non-digital life, González stressed, especially by limiting access to healthcare for patients. The important thing is that there is the competence and experience to implement them, mentioned Gennero Riganti.



Steve Liston (lower left) moderating the panel featuring Sandra Ligia González (top left), Rubén Gennero Riganti (middle) and Hugo Villegas (right).



U.S. President Joe Biden at the 2022 Summit of the Americas (Image: U.S. Department of State)

## *Outcomes on Healthcare at the Summit of the Americas* (JUNE 28, 2022)

The Summit of the Americas held in Los Angeles June 8-10 led to a declaration on health resiliency and U.S. President Joe Biden announced two new mechanisms related to healthcare and the economy: *Americas Health Corps* and Economy and Health Dialogue of the Americas (EHA). These initiatives recognized the interdependency between health, the economy and all areas of social protection, encouraged greater convergence among the inter-American system, and acknowledged the importance of the interaction between countries in the region.

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The EHA is a government-only convening group that seeks to build political will across countries in the region through ministries of foreign affairs, health, economy, trade and with regional expert organizations. This initiative will work in parallel with Americas RISE for Health to specifically connect topics and issues, but also to provide a forum where governments can convene to discuss their health challenges and identify ways to collaborate. Additionally, the EHA will support the region's governments to coordinate and identify tools for collaboration and how the United States can help support implementation. It will also support development of the Health Action Plan agreed at the Summit. The private sector will be a key partner in this initiative.

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Meeting with President Director of Brazilian Health Regulatory Agency (ANVISA) Antonio Barra Torres and Minister of Health of Brazil Marcelo Queiroga

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The inventory of the health workforce in the region is very low and the distribution is very inadequate. For health systems to function and deliver efficient care, it is crucial to have well distributed health workers. ***The Americas Health Corps*** is an initiative that looks at gap analysis in the health workforce and aims to address gaps in quality and competency. This initiative will support the expansion and training of a robust, resilient, and highly skilled workforce capable of providing health services to all segments of society.

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**Following the Summit, the Council met with Administration officials to discuss next steps. These include:**

- **Energizing regional efforts:** Countries that have similar objectives with regard to healthcare must come together to cooperate with, learn from, and support each other. Regionally, countries need to conduct gap analysis and address the lack of overarching frameworks that allow collaboration to occur easily.
- **Engaging the private sector:** It's important that countries continue to leverage the tools and resources of the private sector through partnerships as they would be of huge benefit to the health systems.

- **Ensuring good governance:** Improving the quality and access to healthcare requires work at the national level to expand and strengthen health sectors through reforms.
- **However,** many countries do not have a political framework that allows for a whole of government approach and harmonization across ministries and relevant sectors. Initiatives such as EHA, which involve ministries of foreign affairs and also of the economy, allow for sharing different perspectives, insights, and expertise with the goal of building robust and sustainable systems.

## *Improving Sustainability of Healthcare Systems Through Value-Based Procurement*

**(DECEMBER 7, 2022)**

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, healthcare systems that were already under strain and lacking funds are now facing additional challenges to ensure they can offer sustainable healthcare to patients. Cost-cutting will not allow for sustained and equitable quality care, while additional funding may not improve results if systems are not structured to use it efficiently. This panel addressed the issue of value-based purchasing, focusing mainly on emphasizing how health systems can improve and make patient care more effective. Additionally, the speakers discussed the importance of prioritizing long-term value instead of focusing on short-term savings.



December 7: Value-based procurement program

In the words of Ramón Maspons of the Department of Health of the Government of Catalonia, “we must move from systems oriented directly to comparing based on price, towards systems much more oriented to the purchase of needs, solutions and value.” In this way, we give way to purchases based on value through innovation. Maspons, whose programs won European Innovation Procurement Awards (EUIPA) 2022, added that “never before has there been so much innovation in the portfolios of companies, universities, and research centers, but at the same time never before have we had so little money from the point of view of public



Meeting with Minister of Health of Chile Ximena Aguilera

administrations to incorporate this innovation.” Therefore, it will be very important to adopt schemes such as value-based purchases, which allow transformation through innovation to make health systems more effective and convert them into value generators for patients and service-providing institutions.

Ultimately, as Ramiro Guerrero from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) said “the question is not whether it is cost effective, but what would it take to make it cost effective?” To conclude, Diego Guarín of Merck, in his capacity as FIFARMA Health Policy Working Group Co-Chairman, and Claudia Brabata of Medtronic who serves as Chair of the Access Working Group, AdvaMed Latin America briefed attendees on two cases of purchases and integrated value-based programs where this concept is put into practice.

## COUNTRY-SPECIFIC PROGRAMS

The Council of the Americas Healthcare Series hosted a number of in-person meetings in Washington, DC with health officials from the region, including on the margins of the 30th Pan American Sanitary Conference. These off-the-record sessions allowed Council members and senior government officials from the region to hold detailed discussions on healthcare challenges and opportunities in the region.



Meeting with Costa Rica’s Director General of Health Melissa Ramírez

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We look forward to continuing these important activities in 2023. For information on how to get involved, contact Maria de Lourdes Despradel at [mdespradel@as-coa.org](mailto:mdespradel@as-coa.org).

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The Council of the Americas is grateful to the following companies for their support of Healthcare Series programs in 2022:

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**Council of the Americas (COA)** is the premier international business organization whose members share a common commitment to economic and social development, open markets, the rule of law, and democracy throughout the Western Hemisphere. The Council's membership consists of leading international companies representing a broad spectrum of sectors, including banking and finance, consulting services, consumer products, energy and mining, manufacturing, media, technology, and transportation.

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