



Rubella Watch is an electronic publication disseminated bimonthly by the Immunization Unit of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), Regional Office for the Americas of the World Health Organization (WHO). *Rubella Watch* is a supplement to the *Immunization Newsletter* published by PAHO. The purpose is to provide you with the most up-to-date information and strategies which guide the rubella and congenital rubella syndrome (CRS) elimination initiative currently underway in the Americas.

The goal: eliminate rubella and CRS in the Region by 2010!

News from September 2008

Celebration of the "Vaccination along Borders" on the Tri-border Area of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay

In the spirit of integration and Pan Americanism, health authorities from Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay united in the tri-border area to celebrate the "vaccination against measles and rubella along border areas." The purpose of this impressive joint initiative is the vaccination of the population in the formal and informal border crossings of all countries neighboring Argentina and Brazil, countries that are currently implementing rubella and congenital rubella syndrome (CRS) elimination campaigns.

In the event, which took place in Foz de Iguazú (Brazil), Ciudad del Este (Paraguay), and Posadas (Argentina), the Vice Minister of Health of Paraguay, Dr. Edgar Giménez Caballero, stated that "the vaccination along borders of South American countries is a crucial integration strategy and serves as a portal of entry to reaching the most remote communities, such as indigenous populations, with health services, thus reducing the large gaps that result from inequity."

On 9 August, Brazil launched the "largest campaign in the world" to vaccinate 70 million young adults and adult men and women against measles and rubella. Argentina will follow with the launching of a campaign on 29 September, targeting 6.5 million men, thus completing the vaccination cycle of adolescent and adult populations in the Americas. The celebration of vaccination along borders coincides with the "central day" of the Brazil mega-campaign, which occurred on a Saturday to facilitate access to vaccination for the economically active members of the target population.



Vice Minister of Health of Paraguay, Dr. Edgar Giménez Caballero, celebrates the vaccination along borders, accompanied by the Minister of Health of Misiones Province, Argentina, Dr. José Guccione (left), and the General Campaign Coordinator of Brazil, Marlene Tavares (right).

PAHO/WHO Technical Cooperation to Free the South American Borders from Measles and Rubella

PAHO/WHO Member Countries prioritize efforts to improve health conditions in border areas of the Region to contribute to the reduction of inequities in health. To this end, PAHO/WHO supported the development of the Project of Technical Cooperation among Countries (TCC) in order to vaccinate populations along the shared borders with Brazil and Argentina against measles and rubella during the vaccination campaigns to eliminate rubella and CRS in both countries. The border is regarded as a vulnerable area from both a surveillance and a health services perspective and therefore has been the target of several integrated health projects. In this regard, the project of cooperation represents the desire of the countries of the Region to increase integration and is aligned with the PAHO principles of Pan Americanism and solidarity. It is also an initiative that, from a health services point of view, strengthens local capacity and from a surveillance standpoint, supports the implementation of the international health regulations. International borders are highly populated areas with intense product transit. The high degree of mobility presents an additional challenge for the rubella and CRS elimination initiative, since border populations move from country to country and there is a greater chance they will be excluded from activities as they remain in neighboring countries during

the vaccination campaigns conducted in their countries of origin. Furthermore, given that adult measles-rubella vaccination is not included in the routine program, and that the campaigns in Brazil and Argentina are the last adult rubella vaccination campaigns in the Region, the implementation of an integrated vaccination strategy along borders with neighboring countries is critical.

Graphic Article of the Largest Campaign in the World: “Brazil Free from Rubella”



Men and women visit the vaccination post located in the famous "Maracanã" stage in Rio de Janeiro



Vaccination in stores and shops was one of the strategies recommended by the São Paulo immunization team to reach the highest number of unvaccinated persons possible.



Mobile vaccination posts were strategically located in the Lapa bus station in Salvador, Bahia.



Similarly, vaccination teams placed various posts in the San Pablo metro station between the evening hours of 5 p.m. and 9 p.m. to take advantage of "peak" hours for reaching large concentrations of transient populations.



One of the strategic partners of this campaign has been the Globe Television Network. A vaccination post was placed at a work site of the network to vaccinate company workers.



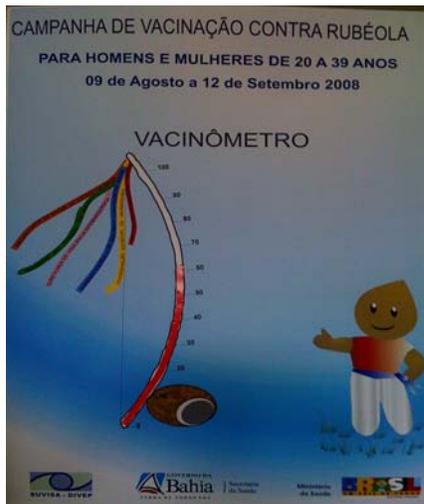
Employees from local stores in the commercial center of Rio de Janeiro took advantage of the lunch hour to visit a vaccination post and receive the MR vaccine.



Vaccination of a soccer player from the "Atlético Mineiro" Club in the Plaza de la Libertad in Belo Horizonte.



Vaccination post in the Integration Terminals of Municipality Transportation: São Cristobal, Portinho, São Luis, Estado de Maranhão.



The immunization team from Bahia incorporated local elements into the vaccine-o-meter, utilizing the image of the "birimbao," a folk instrument used in the popular *capoeira* dance.



Fátima Guirra, Bahia State immunization Coordinator, explains microplanning activities to David Sniadack, international observer from the Regional Office of the Western Pacific of the World Health Organization.



The Rio de Janeiro immunization team vaccinated locals visiting the beach.



Vaccination activities were carried out in Portella, Brazil in a local Samba School.

Upcoming Events

Rubella Vaccination Campaign (2nd stage), Argentina
September-October 2008

If you would like to share meeting dates, other news, or make suggestions as to topics you would like us to discuss in this newsletter, please contact FCH-IM@paho.org



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