

GAFFI and PAHO Join Forces to Combat Fungal Disease in Latin America and the Caribbean

UK, May 14, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Global Action Fund for Fungal Infections ([GAFFI](#)) and the Pan American Health Organisation ([PAHO](#)) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to work together to improve the diagnosis and treatment of life-threatening fungal diseases.

The agreement, which formalizes years of successful collaboration between the two agencies to improve patient health, focuses on cooperation to decrease the impact of fungal disease in the Americas by implementing public health interventions, surveillance, and research strategies targeted at the most important fungal pathogens.

Under the MoU, GAFFI and PAHO will:

Coordinate the participation of expert professionals and activities at country and regional level; Provide technical cooperation and expertise for the development of guidelines, and protocols related to detection, surveillance, laboratory testing, and clinical management, leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) where appropriate; Contribute to research and evidence for the development of biobanks, digital databases, and genomic research; Provide training and capacity building of human resources, including clinicians, laboratory technicians, nurses and microbiologists, among others; Advance advocacy and awareness to promote the importance of AI in fungal disease research and evidence-based practices; Provide linkage with global programs and initiatives to ensure alignment and coordination of efforts in addressing fungal disease health challenges at the global level, including those related to the application of AI in health.

The opportunity to make a significant impact and save lives and livelihoods across the Americas



has never been greater. PAHO and GAFFI plan to leverage experience from successful pilot clinical hubs established in Guatemala and Argentina by expanding these hubs across the continent.

The burden of invasive fungal infections (IFIs) has increased in recent years due to the higher prevalence of immunocompromised patients. Antimicrobial resistance (AMR), particularly related to the *Candida* fungus, also poses additional challenges to patient health and has become a frequent cause of health care-associated infections, especially for both adults and children in intensive care units. The collaboration between GAFFI and PAHO not only tackles the urgent challenge of diagnosing and managing fungal infections and AMR but also reinforces a key focus outlined in the WHO fungal pathogen priority list.

The Global Action Fund for Fungal Infections (GAFFI) has been the leading not-for-profit global voice advocating to overcome life-altering fungal diseases since 2013. GAFFI's vision is "a world free from death and suffering caused by fungal disease" and its mission is to "enable health systems especially in middle- and low-middle income countries to effectively diagnose and treat fungal disease." As a Geneva-based Foundation, GAFFI is the major advocacy and fund-raising body for a number of implementing partners, including governments and both national and international global health agencies.

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) works with the countries of the Americas to improve the health and quality of life of its population. Founded in 1902, it is the world's oldest international public health agency. It serves as the Regional Office of WHO for the Americas and is the specialized health agency of the Inter-American system.

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