

# *PAHO reports that only one in five have been vaccinated in Latin America*

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Washington, August 19 (RHC)-- The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) said Wednesday that in Latin America only one in five people are vaccinated against COVID-19, while the threat of the Delta variant is present throughout the region.

During a press conference, PAHO Director Carissa Etienne warned that the immunization process has become an immediate necessity in view of the growing presence of the Delta variant, as it could jeopardize the progress achieved to date, as well as the lives of thousands of people.

Etienne also pointed out that, on average, only one in five people have received the vaccine in Latin America, but in some countries the figure is less than five percent of the population. Even among the countries with the most resources, none of them has 70 percent of the population fully vaccinated.

On the other hand, the PAHO director highlighted the high number of people who, on par with the physical effects caused by the pandemic, suffer from what she classified as a mental health crisis in the region.

According to several studies carried out by the institution, almost 60 percent of the population suffers from anxiety or depression in the Americas.

Since COVID-19 arrived 16 months ago, stress and fear have invaded daily life, with unprecedented job losses adding to the health emergency.

Carissa Etienne, as PAHO director, urged countries to fulfill their commitments regarding the integration of mental health care into COVID-19 response plans.

In the last week, 1.4 million infections and 20,000 deaths have been reported in the Americas alone. In parts of the continent such as Central America and the Caribbean, cases of infection are on the rise, while in South America there has been a slight decline in recent weeks.

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