



# Pacific Public Health Surveillance Network (PPHSN)



## What is PPHSN?

The Pacific Public Health Surveillance Network (PPHSN) is a voluntary network of countries and organisations dedicated to the promotion of public health surveillance and appropriate response to the health challenges of 22 Pacific Island countries and territories.

## What do we aim for?

Our goal is to improve public health surveillance and response in the Pacific Islands in a sustainable way.

The first priorities of PPHSN are communicable diseases, especially those prone to outbreak. At this stage, the target diseases include: dengue, measles, rubella, influenza, leptospirosis, typhoid fever, cholera, HIV and STIs.

## Who are its members?

PPHSN's core members are the ministries and departments of health of the Pacific Island countries and territories who serve as the governing body of PPHSN. The network is further supported by allied members — regional training institutions, agencies, laboratories, and other organisations or networks with an interest in public health surveillance in the region.

## When was it created?

PPHSN was created in 1996 under the joint auspices of the Pacific Community (SPC) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

## PPHSN Coordinating Body

The PPHSN Coordinating Body (CB), with the support of a focal point (SPC), serves the PPHSN. CB membership is rotated in a staggered manner.

The current membership of the PPHSN-CB includes:

### Core members

- French Polynesia,
- Kiribati,
- Palau,
- Samoa,
- Solomon Islands,
- Tonga,
- Vanuatu.

### Allied members

- U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (U.S. CDC),
- Fiji National University (FNU) College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences,
- Institute of Environmental Science and Research Ltd (ESR),
- Pacific Community (SPC),
- Pacific Island Health Officers Association (PIHOA), and
- World Health Organization (WHO).

SPC, WHO, PIHOA and FNU are permanent allied members of the CB.

### The focal point

SPC has been designated as the focal point for communications and other ongoing support functions.

### For more information on PPHSN, please contact:



Surveillance, Preparedness and Response Programme  
Public Health Division  
Pacific Community (SPC)  
Focal Point of the PPHSN Coordinating Body

Email: [FocalPointPPHSN-CB@spc.int](mailto:FocalPointPPHSN-CB@spc.int)

Website: [www.pphsn.net](http://www.pphsn.net)

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# PPHSN includes six services to prevent and respond to epidemics



## **PacNet**

*for alert and communication*

Launched in 1997, PacNet is the PPHSN email listserv that connects more than 1000 health professionals from the Pacific region and beyond. It allows rapid overall communication, especially early warnings for epidemic threats, and consequently makes it possible to raise awareness and preparedness levels in the region. It also gives access to resources, including technical expertise.



## **EpiNet**

*for preparedness and response*

Initiated in 2001 to function as the response arm of the network, EpiNet is made up of multi-disciplinary national/territorial outbreak response teams. The EpiNet (or equivalent) teams were formed by Pacific Island health authorities in every country and territory. On top of coordinating surveillance and response field activities, EpiNet is also responsible for establishing and maintaining relevant PPHSN target disease surveillance and response protocols, including technical and resource-related aspects of public health operations.



## **Pacific Syndromic Surveillance System**

*for outbreak detection*

Started in 2010, the PPHSN Pacific Syndromic Surveillance System (PSSS) serves as an early warning tool for common outbreak-prone diseases. The PSSS is both indicator- and event-based surveillance. Data are collected weekly on four syndromes – acute fever and rash, diarrhoea, influenza-like-illness, and prolonged fever – from over 200 health care facilities in 23 countries across the Pacific. The reports generated by the PSSS contain information that could indicate the start of an outbreak.



## **LabNet**

*for verification and identification*

Inaugurated in 2000 by PPHSN, LabNet is a three-tier network of public health laboratory services that includes:  
Level 1 (L1): National/territorial laboratories.  
Level 2 (L2): Four public health laboratories from the Pacific Island region (in Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam and New Caledonia) that have agreed to provide select diagnostic services to neighbouring countries or territories according to their individual capacity.  
Level 3 (L3): Disease-specific reference laboratories at the Pacific Rim (Australia, New Zealand and United States). These include WHO Collaborating Centres.



## **PICNet**

*for infection control*

Launched in 2006, PICNet is the infection control network of PPHSN. It is to be used as a tool for communication and sharing of experiences, particularly how to be innovative with limited resources to ensure patient and health care worker safety from infectious diseases. Major activities of PICNet include the development of regional infection prevention and control guidelines, in-country technical assistance and training in infection control.



## **SHIP (DDM)**

*for capacity building*

Capacity building in core epidemiological skills for health workers in the Pacific is among the key recommendations from health ministers in the region. In response, PPHSN introduced the Strengthening Health Interventions in the Pacific – Data for Decision Making (SHIP-DDM) programme, a 3-tier capacity development programme: Postgraduate Certificate in Field Epidemiology, Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Epidemiology, and Masters in Applied Epidemiology, all accredited programs by FNU. SHIP builds on the principle 'from work, at work, for work', and incorporates already existing initiatives for capacity building in essential public health functions.