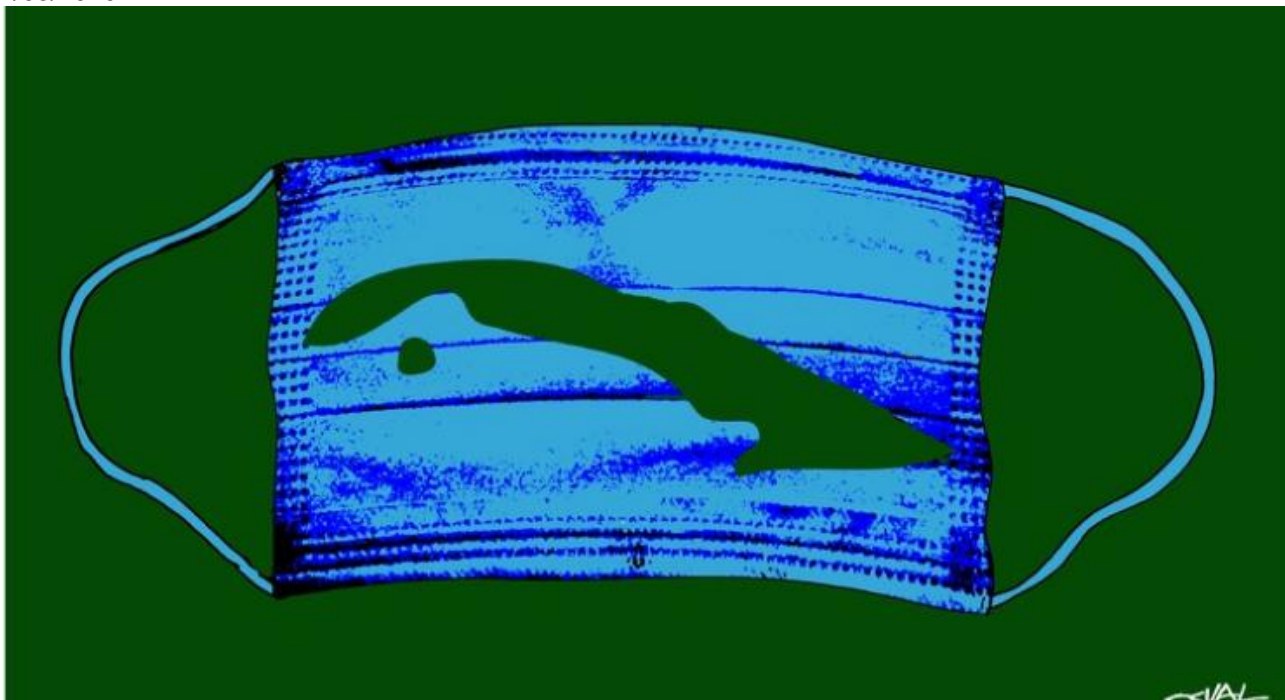

In times of COVID-19: The truths of Cuba

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31/03/2020



With a life expectancy at birth of 79.7 years in 2019, infant mortality of 5.0 per 1,000 live births, the elimination of 11 immune-preventable diseases and malaria in the early 1970s and, more recently, having been the first country in the world to certify the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV / AIDS and congenital syphilis, Cuba constitutes a case study of high interest to all.

Despite the scarcity of economic resources that the country presents, the State dedicates around 27% of the country's GDP to Public Health.

Of the 801 medicines included in the main list of Cuban medicines, the national pharmaceutical, pharmaceutical and medical industry secures the 64.1% of the medicines that the Cuban health system requires.

The resilience of its National Health System (SNS), its ability to prepare for and respond to emergencies and epidemic outbreaks, the presence of more than 48,000 health collaborators in 62 countries, Cuba's outstanding interventions in emergency situations such as the disease Ebola in West Africa in 2014 or the earthquakes in Ecuador in 2016 and Mexico in 2017 - to name just a few examples - and having graduated more than 28,000 doctors from more than 100 countries, are all elements that result in the importance of the Cuban experience in the advance towards Universal Health and reiterate the importance of knowing better how those achievements were achieved.

The presence of Cuban doctors in the world amounts to 164 countries with more than 400 thousand professionals. They have made 1,900 million consultations, 13,777,000 surgical procedures, and 35,787 professionals from 141 countries have graduated from Cuban universities.

With the coronavirus pandemic, how have Cuban doctors' tasks changed?

Timely surveillance from primary health care is vital in the prevention and confrontation of COVID-19. Precisely, active investigations of cases with respiratory symptoms, together with educational talks in communities, work

centers and schools, constitute an essential part of the measures the country is taking to reduce the risk of the spread of the new coronavirus.

The family doctor's and nurse's offices, like the polyclinics, are prepared to face this epidemiological situation; At these levels, a plan for the preparation and training of health personnel is developed.

In each polyclinic in the country there is a different area for the care of patients who come with respiratory symptoms, consultations and specific premises with medical and nursing personnel to attend and evaluate this type of case.

If these patients do not have this epidemiological genius, the behavior is different and is treated like the rest of Acute Respiratory Infections. Taking into account epidemiology, doing a good survey, a good interrogation, and being able to define what the patient's position is, where he has come from, then depends on the behavior that the doctor must take ”.

The result of the actions undertaken to guide the entire population has been effective, although there is still insistence on staying informed.

Health hearings are conducted in an organized manner. Patients in the office are told the day and time when they will be performed, in conjunction with the family doctor and nurse. Usually a place close to end is chosen with all the other people.

Medical students also take part in the execution of these prevention and detection activities for patients with COVID-19.

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10 milestones in the history of the Cuban health system

- 1960- Creation of a single, free, universal coverage, centrally managed health system
- 1961- Change of focus of care throughout the system from curative to preventive
- 1970-1980- Development of Primary Health Care that led to the training of the Specialist in Comprehensive General Medicine and consolidation of international collaboration in health
- 1988- Creation of the Ocular Microsurgery Center
- 1991- Creation of the First Scientific Center of Cuba, which includes institutions such as the Immunoassay Center, the Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, and the National Center for Bio-Preparations
- 1992 - Creation of Health Analysis and Trends Units and the Electronic Health Information Network
- 1999- Inauguration of the Latin American School of Medical Sciences
- 2002- Creation of the Comprehensive Program for the Elderly, with a community and institutional focus
- 2003- Creation of the program known as Operation Miracle, which offers free ophthalmological-surgical treatment to poor citizens of Latin America and the Caribbean
- 2005- Foundation of the Internationalist Contingent 'General Henry Reeve', a permanent medical structure specialized in natural disasters