

# *Access to vaccination for all Cubans*

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**The COVID 19 exposed how much the world lacks to guarantee human rights to all its inhabitants**

By María Josefina Arce

COVID-19 exposed how much the world lacks to guarantee human rights to all its inhabitants and how deep are the existing inequalities. Once again the developed nations showed their selfishness. The hoarding of vaccines against the disease caused by the new coronavirus left the poorest nations stranded, without the necessary immediate access to these drugs.

In Cuba, the state has guaranteed the right to vaccination for decades, so in the face of the pandemic it could not be different. The effort deployed, despite the limitations imposed by the U.S. blockade, was reversed in favor of each citizen, who is immunized with its own products, thanks to the talent and dedication of its scientific community and the political will of the authorities.

This process is advancing successfully and, together with other factors such as the strength of our health system and the tireless work of its personnel, has made it possible for the country to control the pandemic today.

No one here has been abandoned to their fate. For vaccination, we have thought of everyone, of those convalescing from COVID 19, of those allergic to thimerosal, of those with other ailments and of children and young people.

In fact, Cuba became the first country in the world to carry out an immunization campaign in pediatric ages, given the quality, safety and immunogenicity demonstrated by the drugs for this group.

Moreover, the Center for State Control of Medicines, Equipment and Medical Devices authorized the emergency use of the Soberana Plus vaccine for the pediatric population over two years of age convalescing from COVID 19.

Since last September, a dose of this immunogen has been administered to those over 19 years of age, with two months or more of hospital or home medical discharge, after becoming ill with the virus.

In addition, a booster dose is currently being administered to the population with the full immunization schedule, a strategy that has already benefited healthcare workers.

The results in the Greater Antilles are not surprising. The health of citizens has always been a government priority since January 1959, in view of the terrible conditions existing in the country at that time, denounced by the historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro, in his self-defense plea at the trial for the assaults on the Moncada Barracks, in Santiago de Cuba, and Carlos Manuel de Céspedes Barracks, in Bayamo, on July 26, 1953.

Health is free and universal in our country, which is also distinguished by programs such as the vaccination program that protects against 13 diseases and each year exceeds 98 percent coverage nationwide.

The successive immunization campaigns that have been carried out since 1962 have made it possible to eliminate six diseases from our territory and others are no longer a health problem.

It is important to emphasize that vaccination is not limited to the child population, but also reaches vulnerable groups to protect them from seasonal influenza and typhoid fever, among other diseases.

Vaccination is a cornerstone of our health system, which aims to protect the most valuable thing, the life of every citizen.

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