

## **Dr. Danny Peña, an Example of Good Practices on Neonatal Screening**



*Dr. Danny Peña as facilitator during the Neonatal Screening for Microcephaly Workshop in Regional Health Service V, San Pedro de Macorís, Dominican Republic.*

Dr. Danny Peña is a Perinatologist Pediatrician at the Maternity Nuestra Señora de la Altagracia University Hospital in the Dominican Republic. This is a national reference maternity, with 330 beds and approximately 1,115 deliveries per month. Dr. Peña is the leader of the Quality Improvement Team for the Newborn component, which receives the technical support of the ASSIST-Zika Project in the Dominican Republic. In 2017, the Newborn Care Quality Improvement Team started working to improve the measurement and registration of head circumference of all newborns in the hospital, in order to strengthen the early diagnosis tools for microcephaly associated with Zika.

One of the team's achievements has been the inclusion of the Zika component and the correct technique for measuring head circumference in the academic training of physicians who pursue their specialization and sub-specialization. After identifying its gaps and weaknesses, the team launched an improvement plan which has accomplished significant achievements, such as the correct screening of all newborns in the maternity, as well as the proper maintenance of 100% of their data for over a year.

The team has received regular training on the Quality Improvement Model, the in-person Basic Course on Zika, and on Neonatal Microcephaly Screening in the Zika context. The benefits from these knowledge updates have gone beyond the team, since Dr. Peña has served as a multiplier of good practices for doctors in the hospital and in other health units, within the country and abroad.

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Dr. Peña was in charge of assembling potential team members and, under her guidance, the improvement team was formed. The actions that Dr. Peña implemented included the distribution of the first CLAP/PAHO-standardized measuring tapes to different health centers, in support of the ASSIST-Zika Project initiatives in the country. In addition, Dr. Peña included in the academic program of Perinatology pre-internship, internship and subspecialty more of the contents of the in-person training on Zika and the correct screening of head circumference measurement. This was done in order to disseminate the information about Zika, and to contribute to the long-term sustainability of the changes and improvements made by the team.



An additional major responsibility of Dr. Danny Peña is her role as Director of the Diploma on Perinatology for nurses, through the Ministry of Public Health of the Dominican Republic. Dr. Peña has included training on arbovirolosis in newborns in the academic programming of this curriculum.

Dr. Peña is currently assisting the technicians in the ASSIST-Zika Dominican Republic project with the process of providing training to health providers from different regions of the country on a voluntary basis, as well as working as a facilitator during the training workshop on “Correct screening and head circumference measurement in the Zika context”, thus contributing to the expansion of the project. In addition, Dr. Peña has supported the prenatal care quality improvement team with their work in order to permanently close one of the biggest gaps identified in the health center: The provision of Zika counseling in post-obstetric event rooms.



Dr. Peña has worked on the creation of an internal tool to standardize care in post-obstetric event care rooms with the inclusion of Zika counseling. The Post-Obstetric Event Care Protocol of the Maternity Nuestra Señora de la Altagracia was prepared with the support of the technical team of the ASSIST-Zika Project.

The continuous improvement team is working to improve the quality of the services. Dr. Peña is a key component in this work, not only at the intrahospital level, but also for its expansion, thus contributing to the sustainability and institutionalization of these good practices.

*“With Zika, we have to keep fighting, we cannot drop our guard, we have to remember that we are dealing with an endemic vector, it lives among us, and that is why we are required to provide information on prevention and management to as many providers as possible and, what is more, educate the community.” (Dr. Danny Peña).*