



# 2020

ANNUAL REPORT

The issue of 2020 was COVID-19 and its effects on economies and healthcare systems. The tragedy of deficient and fragmented public health and healthcare systems affected high-, middle- and low-income countries, but there have been lessons learned on prevention and management of a health crisis, as well as a surge in innovations and progress on long-standing impediments to higher quality care. Dissemination of those lessons remains uneven. Aceso Global has addressed COVID-19 directly and continued to focus on the issues of healthcare delivery and financing that will together have a major role in addressing the shortcomings laid bare by COVID-19.

Due to COVID-19, telehealth has emerged as the norm in much of the world, including across Emerging Markets where adoption of digital tools accelerated out of necessity. That took the form of telemedicine, which had received resistance from clinicians across most of the world, but digital solutions were harnessed not only to support clinical services but also aid governments in introducing or combining data registries. In our work for the Joint Learning Network (JLN), we examined digital health solutions for managing patient flows during COVID-19, and extended beyond clinical services to help governments design or integrate data registries that assist in reaching the needy. Our work on the private health sector revealed a similar growth in digital health solutions that enhance integrated care, track patients and their illnesses, and boost efficiency in supply chains. We continued our collaboration with the Rwanda Social Security Board on health insurance design and management, heavily focused on improved harnessing of data for decisions, which also entails digital underpinnings.

Our areas of engagement have also expanded. We continue our work on quality of care in the *Salud Mesoamérica* Program in Central America and Chiapas,

in supporting JLN countries on population targeting to expand social health insurance and with Transition Readiness Assessments for the Global Fund. We also launched initiatives in Asia with Novartis Oncology on tobacco taxation and revenue allocation, the Inter-American Development Bank on reforming payment systems in Peru, and the JLN on implementing innovations to better manage care for COVID-19 patients while maintaining essential services. We undertook on a major report for the Global Fund on outlining the potential for Private Sector Engagement to complement their public sector focus.

The logical outgrowth of the high cost of the pandemic will be how to address the shortcomings. We have launched work with Wellcome Trust on initiatives to address health security and pandemic management. These issues will be on the global agenda for the G-7 and the G-20, and the focus of global health priorities for the next decade. Public health, health systems strengthening, healthcare financing, and more targeted concerns regarding quality and integrated care become even more relevant in this environment. However, without incentives to drive an integrated public health system and delivery network, pandemic identification, prevention and management initiatives are unlikely to take hold. Financing will be important, but nothing can substitute for more integrated country systems and improved effectiveness. We are committed to participating in this evolving agenda, bringing to bear the breadth of experience and expertise of our team. Hopefully 2021 will see a reversal of the slump of 2020 and a renewal of efforts that accelerate growth and strengthen healthcare and public health.



MAUREEN A. LEWIS



JERRY M. LA FORGIA

# MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDERS



# HEALTH CARE financing

Health financing models are adapting to population needs and diversifying to increase quality, value, and availability of care. Aceso Global is supporting low- to middle- income countries in developing and reforming health financing mechanisms.

The Rwandan Social Security Board (RSSB), facing rapidly rising costs in its health insurance arm, sought strategic advice in identifying key challenges and mitigating measures to improve solvency and overall performance. Aceso Global diagnosed sources of cost escalations through claims data analysis, defined informational gaps in IT systems, and provided recommendations for controlling costs and raising quality. Putting in place standards, data monitoring and accountability mechanisms for providers will be a key issue in strengthening the social health insurance system.

Throughout 2020, Aceso Global provided advisory services to the Inter-American Development Bank and government of Peru in restructuring the countries' financial mechanisms. Aceso Global analyzed provider payment systems and institutional



*Valor Health Day, Brazil 2020, hosted by Grupo IAG Saúde  
Maureen Lewis delivered the keynote address "Value Based  
Care: Building Quality and Value through Innovative Financing."*



# HEALTHCARE financing

capacities for strategic purchasing and care integration. We applied relevant OECD experience and lessons learned in consolidating financial systems to align financial incentives through provider payment systems and paying for care integration. In early 2021, Aceso Global recommended options and corresponding actions to effectively reduce fragmentation, encourage the successful implementation of provider payment mechanisms, and incentivize the formation of functional service delivery networks.

In Asia, Aceso Global is studying how taxes can fund specific health services.

Many countries across Asia have imposed tobacco taxes in an effort to improve the health status and longevity of residents, while channeling revenues to sustainably fund related health services. On behalf of Novartis Oncology, Aceso Global conducted a landscape analysis of current uses and levels of tobacco taxation across the region, benchmarking to global best practice. Phase Two of this project will map relevant internal and external stakeholders and assess the viability of influencing tobacco tax policy to meet both fiscal and public health priorities in the march to universal health coverage (UHC).

# INNOVATIVE SERVICE DELIVERY

Today's problems require cutting edge solutions. Aceso Global is delivering innovative approaches to the world's most complex health issues, such as COVID-19. In 2020, innovation occupied the majority of Aceso Global's project portfolio.

Aceso Global is strengthening the health system response to COVID-19 by bringing together countries to explore and learn from each other's various models, practices

and innovations in providing comprehensive and continuous COVID-19 case management and maintenance of essential non-COVID care across multiple care settings. Through the JLN's Learning Exchange entitled "Patient Pathways and Pandemics: COVID-19 and Beyond," Aceso Global facilitated a 6-month virtual engagement for countries to share relevant national experiences and generate actionable outputs that can be adapted and implemented across country contexts. This work is ongoing through 2021, as Aceso Global has launched a Community of Practice emerging from the Learning Exchange focusing on the planning, implementation and monitoring of initiatives to scale up e-consultations. In 2020, Aceso Global shared insights in strategic and innovative approaches



# INNOVATIVE SERVICE DELIVERY



Maureen Lewis speaks at a webcast hosted by the Woodrow Wilson Center.

to addressing COVID-19 on several platforms. Aceso Global's CEO Maureen Lewis virtually spoke at conferences and webinars hosted by organizations across the world, including at the Woodrow Wilson Center's webcast **"Healthcare in a Post-COVID-19**

**Brazil: Pathways for Public-Private Partnerships."** Dr. Lewis produced a podcast to share her insights with a broader audience. In discussion with Dr. Robert Janett, Dr. Lewis discussed **"Innovative Approaches to Managing COVID-19."** Aceso Global also produced a blog about how COVID-19 is catalyzing integrated care: **"Business as Unusual or Back-to-the Future: Covid-19 and Healthcare System Integration"**.

Beyond COVID-19, Aceso Global understands the value of integrated care in 2020, supporting dozens of countries in strengthening linkages in their healthcare systems. Building on the close of the Learning Exchange on Vertical Integration in 2018 (hosted by the JLN), Aceso Global collaborated with the Philippines' Department of Health throughout 2019 and

2020 to assess ongoing efforts to implement Service Delivery Networks (SDNs), which aim to strengthen provider-to-provider linkages across levels of care. Working jointly with researchers and government in the Philippines, Aceso Global facilitated the development of three tools to assess healthcare facility features related to integration, as well as to identity linkages (or lack thereof) across facilities and programs. Aceso Global then oversaw the application of the tools in 2 provinces considered to be the most advanced in their SDNs.

The technical report consisted of detailed recommendations on how to accelerate implementation of SDNs across the Philippines accounting for variation in readiness conditions.

Private-public partnerships are another innovative engagement that is improving the effectiveness and efficiency of healthcare resources. The role of the private sector in achieving UHC has come to the forefront in global health

At the Rethinking Brazil Health Conference hosted by Forum Inovacao Saude, Maureen Lewis participated in the presentation on "Health in the United States and its Funding Model"



# INNOVATIVE SERVICE DELIVERY



as efforts to reach UHC have stymied. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria is considering how they can most effectively engage the private sector and maintain their agenda for ending the endemics of AIDS, TB, and malaria by 2030. Aceso Global conducted a study focusing on the for-profit private sector to identify innovations in public-private partnership that have relevance for the TGF, as well as opportunities for action, including six country case studies: South Africa, India, Indonesia, Kenya, South Sudan, and Thailand. Aceso Global's analysis and report found a good deal of ongoing engagements despite the absence of an overarching strategy. The report recommends the need to better define the parameters, issues, and opportunities around greater public-private relationships, and outlines benefits to the Global Fund, governments, and patients in engaging the private sector.



*On May 14, Maureen Lewis participated in a private roundtable hosted by the Argentina-U.S. Strategic Forum to discuss the distinct strategies Argentina, the U.S. and other countries implemented to combat the Covid-19 pandemic.*

# QUALITY

Innovation in health financing and service delivery are driving quality improvement.

In 2020, Aceso Global continued its partnership with the Inter-American Development Bank in an Innovations for Quality Improvement (IQI) project

to support sustainable quality improvement in countries involved in the *Salud Mesoamérica* Initiative (SMI). SMI targets health inequalities in Central America and Chiapas, Mexico, through a results-based financing mechanism targeting the poorest areas of each country. Achievements have proved impressive but sustaining SMI's gains requires a culture of continuous quality improvement in service delivery and healthcare organizations, including upgraded skills in leadership, communication and teamwork, and use of data in managing services at all levels. Aceso Global's IQI program aims to equip middle managers to become quality improvement coaches and champions for frontline primary healthcare providers, and to raise the



Maureen Lewis was invited to be a guest speaker on the AsQmoveOn webinar, a rich discussion on Accountable Care Organizations (ACO).

# QUALITY



profile of quality throughout their organizations, and ultimately the health system. A pilot was planned in Honduras for 2020, but has been postponed due to the pandemic. During 2020, Aceso Global also developed guides for supervisors and supervisees on how to incorporate coaching and other “soft skills” into their work practices, and for supervisor groups on how to introduce processes to create an enabling managerial environment within their groups.



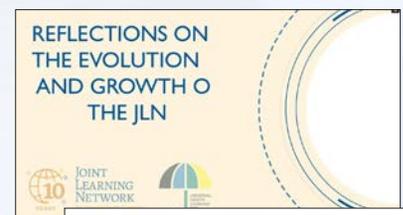
*Jerry La Forgia was a speaker in the debate on “How To Establish Integrated Care Models, Focusing On The Patient, In A Crisis Moment Like The Covid-19 Pandemic” hosted by Congresso Nacional de Hospitales Privados (CONAHP) 2020*

# UNIVERSAL HEALTH coverage

Achieving universal health coverage will require a broad and comprehensive approach to health reform.

In advancing the agenda towards expanding health coverage in Emerging Markets, Aceso Global continued its collaboration with the Joint Learning Network for Universal Health Coverage (JLN) through 2020, leading the Learning Collaborative on Population Targeting. This Learning Collaborative establishes a platform for JLN members from 12 countries to learn through peer exchange, and support each other to improve the design, implementation and maintenance of effective targeting systems for health in order to improve coverage under social health insurance. Following the

*Jerry La Forgia participated in a panel discussion at the 10 year anniversary celebration for the Joint Learning Network (JLN).*





# UNIVERSAL HEALTH coverage

COVID-19 hiatus, the Learning Collaborative has restarted with virtual learning activities, and with a focus on implementation of priority initiatives. In December 2020, Aceso Global joined with technical and country partners to celebrate the 10-year anniversary of the JLN.

Aceso Global is also supporting donor transition and sustainability planning for the HIV response in Mauritius. Working closely with government, donors and civil society, Aceso Global assessed the country's readiness to manage the transition away from HIV resources provided by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, identifying gaps, challenges and opportunities for sustainability. The evolving impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the country's health system and

fiscal outlook has a direct bearing on transition readiness. The Transition Readiness Assessment offers an input into the national Sustainability and Transition Strategy for HIV, with a Work Plan, collaboratively developed by Aceso Global, and the Country Coordinating Mechanism, including the Ministry of Health and civil society partners.

In 2020, Aceso Global also supported the JC Flowers Foundation to analyze and interpret the health coverage data collected from malaria surveys in Angola, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Aceso Global developed key indicators to determine household coverage of insecticide-treated nets, among other descriptive analytics.

# CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS



- **La Forgia** presented on the design, testing and implementation of the Quality Improvement and Management Competency Program for the *Salud Mesoamérica* Initiative (SMI) managed by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), January 27
  - ▶ Contributors on the SMI are Eduardo Gonzales, Global Fellow at the Wilson Center, Emma Iriarte, Director of the Regional Malaria Elimination Initiative of the IDB, Pedro Bernal, Impact Evaluator at IDB, Nana Twum-Danso, Managing Director for Health at the Rockefeller Foundation, and Jerry La Forgia, CTO at Aceso Global
  - ▶ Dr. Iriarte and Dr. Bernal also presented on the mid-level results of the SMI
- **Lewis** on a Global Health Investment Expert Panel meeting hosted by the Economist Intelligence Unit, March 24 and August 11
- **Lewis** presented “Perspectives on Restructuring of SUS for the 21st Century” at *Instituto de Estudos para Políticas de Saúde* (IEPS), São Paulo, Brazil, April 15
- **Lewis** presented “Covid-19 Response in the US” at Brazilian Association of Cardiologists event: *Pandemia da COVID-19 Direto a Saúde e Economia* (Covid-19, Right to Healthcare and the Economy), May 1
- **Lewis** CSIS roundtable on “Covid-19 CSIS” hosted by the Argentina-U.S. Strategic Forum, May 14
  - ▶ Dr. Lewis was joined by Dr. Pablo Bonheví, Head of Infectious Diseases at CEMIC and member of the Working Group on Covid-19 of President Fernández, Dr. Oscar Cingolani, Professor and Researcher at the Johns Hopkins

University and member of the Johns Hopkins Special Group on Treating Patients with Covid-19, Dr. Sergio Solmesky, President of CEMIC. Dr. Gines González García, Minister of Health of Argentina.

- **Lewis** participated in a webcast on “Healthcare in a Post-COVID-19 Brazil: Pathways for Public-Private Partnerships” hosted by the Wilson Center, May 27
  - ▶ Dr. Lewis was joined by Leandro Fonseca, former President and Director of Brazil’s National Agency of Supplemental Health (ANS), Ana Maria Malik, Professor and Coordinator of *FGVsaúde*, Getulio Varga, and Joel Velasco, Latin America Director of United Healthcare.
- **Lewis** “How to Organize New Models and Generate Value in Health Care?” at a panel on “International and National Experience in Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) hosted by *AsQmoveON*, September 9
  - ▶ Dr. Lewis was joined by Vilma Dias, Director at *AsQ Saude*, and Eduardo Maia, Director of Innovation and Strategy at Amil, Brazil’s largest HMO.
- **Lewis** presented a keynote address on “Value Based Care – Building Quality and Value through Innovative Finance” at *Jornada Valor em Saúde*, (Value of Health Event) hosted by Grupo IAG, Belo Horizonte, MG. Chaired by Renato Couto, President of IAG Saude November 5
- **Lewis** presented “Health in the United States and its Funding Model” at a panel on “Rethinking Brazilian Health” and hosted by *Forum Inovação Saúde* (Health Innovation Forum) November 10
  - ▶ Chaired by Dr. Claudio Lottenberg, Chairman of the Board of Albert Einstein Hospital, the highest ranked hospital in

## CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

LAC, Dr. Gonzalo Vecina, Profesor, USP and ex-President ANVISA, and Andre Medici, ex World Bank official, prominent Brazilian health economist and blogger *Monitor de Saúde*.

- **La Forgia** participated in a debate on “**How To Establish Integrated Care Models, Focusing On The Patient, In A Crisis Moment Like the Covid-19 Pandemic**” at the webinar “Lessons from the pandemic: challenges and perspectives for the Brazilian health system,” hosted by CONAHP 2020 (National Association of Private Hospitals), November 16
  - ▶ Dr. La Forgia was joined by Vidal Seegobin, Managing Director for International Research at Advisory Board, and João Alceu, Vice President at Interodonto.
- **La Forgia** participated in the **10-year Anniversary Celebration for the Joint Learning Network**, December 10th

# PUBLICATIONS BLOGS & PODCASTS



- Blog by Jerry La Forgia, Kiran Correa and Madeleine Lambert on **“Business as Unusual or Back-to-the Future: Covid-19 and Healthcare System Integration”**, July 6, 2020
- Journal Article: **Predicted COVID-19 fatality rates based on age, sex, comorbidities, and health system capacity**; Jesse Heitner, et al. (Sept, 2020), from Stockholm University and CGD; published by BMJ Global Health
- Podcast on **“Innovative Approaches to Managing COVID-19: A Conversation with Dr. Robert Janett”**, July 31

# ACESO GLOBAL STAFF



**Maureen Lewis**  
CEO & Founding  
Director



**Jerry La Forgia**  
CTO & Founding  
Director



**Jonty Roland**  
Associate Director



**Jake Mendales**  
Health Economist



**Scott Wells**  
Operations Director



**Madeleine Lambert**  
Senior Analyst



**Alexander Csanadi**  
Analyst



**Sebastien Elie-York**  
Analyst



**Esteban Bermúdez**  
Analyst



**Sofi Bergkvist**  
Senior Non-Resident  
Associate



**Michael Bourke**  
Senior Non-Resident  
Associate



**Ann Casanova**  
Senior Non-Resident  
Associate



**Pedro Chequer**  
Senior Non-Resident  
Associate



**Ioan Cleaton-Jones**  
Senior Non-Resident  
Associate



**Kiran Correa**  
Non-Resident  
Associate



**Sandra Dratler**  
Senior Non-Resident  
Associate



**Robert Janett**  
Senior Non-Resident  
Associate



**Matthias Loening**  
Senior Non-Resident  
Associate



**Rafael Mazin**  
Senior Non-Resident  
Associate



**Sarah Mintz**  
Senior Non-Resident  
Associate



**Giota Panopoulou**  
Senior Non-Resident  
Associate



**Joanne Shear**  
Senior Non-Resident  
Associate



**Robert Taylor**  
Senior Non-Resident  
Associate



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1616 P Street NW, Suite 103 | Washington DC 20036  
mlambert@acesoglobal.org | [www.acesoglobal.org](http://www.acesoglobal.org)

