

Rana A. Hajjeh, M.D.

IRC Chair of Gavi's Independent Review Committee (IRC)



Current Position: Senior Affiliate Professor at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health; Chair of the External Advisory Board of the Faculty of Health Sciences, the American University of Beirut.

Previous Position and Experience: A physician, epidemiologist, and global public health leader with more than thirty years of experience. Most recently, she was President of the Population Council in New York (2024–2025), a global research organization working on reproductive health, gender equality, and climate adaptation in more than 50 countries. At WHO's Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office (EMRO) in Cairo, she served as Director of Programme Management (2019–2024), overseeing a portfolio exceeding US \$500 million and directing technical programmes across 22 countries, many of them in conflict and emergency settings; she previously directed EMRO's Communicable Diseases Division (2016–2019). At CDC she was Director of the Division of Bacterial Diseases within the National Center for Immunizations and Respiratory Diseases (2008–2016), managing some 180 staff and working closely with the U.S. Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). Earlier CDC roles included Head of the Disease Surveillance Program at NAMRU-3 in Cairo (2003–2005), Epidemiology Section Chief and Medical Epidemiologist in the Mycotic Diseases Branch, and service as an Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) Officer.

From 2005 to 2009 she served as Director of the GAVI Hib Initiative, based at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, leading a consortium of WHO, CDC, Johns Hopkins, and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine to accelerate Hib vaccine introduction across 72 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Pacific, and the Middle East.

She has served on numerous advisory and governance bodies, including the WHO EMRO Immunization Regional Technical Advisory Group, the Scientific Advisory Board of the Mérieux Foundation, and the International Council of the Virchow Foundation, and was President-Elect of the International Society for Infectious Diseases.

Areas of Expertise: Immunization and vaccine-preventable diseases, with deep expertise in bacterial vaccines (Hib, pneumococcal, meningococcal, and pertussis) as well as the full scope of immunization health systems (routine and campaign delivery, cold and supply chain management, epidemiologic surveillance, health financing, and equity-centred programming for underserved and hard-to-reach populations). She has a particularly strong understanding of outbreak response and fragile and emergency settings, and comes with extensive experience chairing technical review committees, building consensus among multidisciplinary experts, and working directly with ministers of health and finance. She is fully proficient in English, French, and Arabic, with working knowledge of Spanish.

Education and degrees: M.D., American University of Beirut, Lebanon; B.S. in Biology, American University of Beirut; diploma of the Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS), CDC. She completed her internship, residency in Internal Medicine, and fellowship in Infectious Diseases at Emory University Hospitals. She is board certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine and the American Board of Infectious Diseases, and holds a Certificate in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene from the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene (ASTMH).

Additional information: Dr. Hajjeh is a Fellow of the Infectious Diseases Society of America and the author of more than 200 peer-reviewed publications and book chapters. In 2014 she received the Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medal ("Sammies") as Federal Employee of the Year, and in 2022 she received a WHO Excellence Award for the COVID-19 response. Her earlier honors include the U.S. Navy Meritorious Civilian Service Medal (2005), the James Nakano Citation (2007), and multiple CDC Group Awards for Global Health Achievement. She serves on the editorial boards of the International Journal of Infectious Diseases and the Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal and has reviewed for numerous infectious disease and public health journals.