

Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health and Child Survival



Abt Associates' programs are **helping to end maternal and child deaths** by supporting delivery of lifesaving health care services including immunizations, diarrhea and pneumonia treatment, nutritional supplementation, malaria control, and tools to improve care for mothers during pregnancy and delivery and for newborns. Additionally, Abt is improving access to and quality of care for women and children by working to strengthen health systems.

Focusing on Preventable Causes

This year, 6.6 million children will die before their fifth birthday from preventable causes, and 44 percent of those deaths will be among newborns. Every year, an estimated 289,000 mothers die from pregnancy- and childbirth-related complications. Abt supports international initiatives to address and focus on these issues including *Acting on the Call* and *Every Woman Every Child*.

Addressing Bottlenecks to Coverage and Improving Access to Quality Services

Reducing Newborn Deaths from Sepsis

The 2013 Jordan Perinatal and Neonatal Mortality Study report highlighted respiratory distress as the leading cause of neonatal deaths (54 percent), followed by sepsis (16 percent). Based on the findings of an assessment related to IV preparation in neonatal intensive care units in public hospitals, USAID's Health Systems Strengthening II (HSS II) Project formed and supported a technical working group of neonatal and infection prevention specialists from three public institutions to develop "Aseptic IV Preparations and Infection Prevention Guidelines" and train staff from each institution in the clinical application, leading to sharp reductions in neonatal sepsis. HSS II helped implement 30 Hospital Safe Motherhood Committees in public hospitals to act as supervisory bodies for safe motherhood and neonatal care initiatives, to link safe motherhood and family planning services, and to foster a culture of continuous quality improvement.



Financing Mechanisms

The USAID-funded Health Finance and Governance (HFG) Project helps strengthen country capacity to apply health financing mechanisms to improve maternal and child health (MCH) services. To contribute to the evidence on the effectiveness of health financing interventions, HFG has published journal articles on the impact of user fee exemptions and insurance on use of MCH services; evaluated an insurance scheme covering MCH services in Nigeria; and is developing guidance for countries to more accurately measure their MCH spending. HFG is also developing a tool that will estimate the impact of health system strengthening interventions on saving women and children's lives.

Improving Quality of MNCH Services

To curb maternal and newborn mortality, the Government of the Dominican Republic supported the establishment of Maternal and Child Centers of Excellence to address the high incidence of maternal deaths despite the fact that over 97 percent of births were carried out by health professionals. This Abt-led intervention, funded by USAID, focused on 10 hospitals which administer 22 percent of the country's live births. Health system strengthening interventions, combined with quality improvements in maternal and child health services, cut maternal deaths at the hospitals by half between 2010 to 2011, contributing to a nationwide reduction of deaths by 16 percent during the same period.



Complete Package of MNCH Services

The DFID-funded Partnerships for Transforming Health Systems 2 (PATHS2) Project in Nigeria is supporting the delivery of a package of MCH services in both the public and private sector. Interventions include health worker capacity building, promotion of antenatal care (ANC), and use of skilled birth attendants. In five years, the percentage of women in PATHS2-supported program areas making at least four ANC visits increased from 22 to 45 percent.

Improving Infant and Child Feeding Practices

The USAID-funded Zambia Integrated Systems Strengthening Program (ZISSP) supported the Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health to train 625 health workers in infant and young child feeding (IYCF) and 855 community volunteers to provide community IYCF education, counseling, and referral services to complement facility-based nutrition services. The trained health workers and community volunteers counseled caretakers of children under two on how to prevent malnutrition, contributing to reductions in malnutrition.

Combating Pneumonia and Diarrhea

As subcontractor to CARE India on a Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation grant, Abt is developing a comprehensive model for effectively addressing child mortality related to pneumonia and diarrhea in Bihar. Abt will train private providers to adhere to standards for treatment and work to ensure that both informal and formal private providers refer severe cases to qualified public/private providers.

Scaling Up Access to ORS and Zinc

By partnering with local manufacturers and private providers, and by educating caregivers on the effectiveness of oral rehydration salts (ORS) and zinc for treatment of pediatric diarrhea, the USAID-funded Strengthening Health Outcomes through the Private Sector (SHOPS) Project is improving access to and use of ORS/zinc. In Ghana, SHOPS developed a mass media campaign to introduce zinc and promote its use alongside ORS. The project partnered with local manufacturers and marketers to encourage production of zinc and contributed to the development of commercially viable distribution models. These demand generation efforts are changing behaviors; in 2014 nearly 36 percent of children under five were treated with ORS/zinc in comparison to 1.3 percent in 2012.

Improving Nutritional Status of Children

The USAID-funded Tuboreshe Chakula Project in Tanzania is pioneering market-led food fortification to help reduce malnutrition in children and other vulnerable groups in remote regions. The project is marketing Virutubushi, an affordable micronutrient powder that provides ten vitamins and five minerals not typically found in Tanzanian diets. Likewise, the project is supporting the fortification of cooking oils to increase vitamin A in children's diets.

Promoting Clean Hands

Abt's Assistance Technique National Plus (ATN Plus) program funded by USAID in Mali supported a national campaign emphasizing the importance of hand washing with soap as an essential behavior to prevent diarrheal disease. Only 15 percent of households in Mali use soap for hand washing. The Ministry of Health and Abt launched a campaign to raise awareness of the link between hand washing and health and worked to make hand washing materials available in households and public places.

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