Continuing Progress in Global Health

Through its support for global health programs, the United States has been successful in reducing maternal and child deaths, slowing the spread of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases, expanding access to family planning, responding quickly to health emergencies in times of disaster, and preventing malnutrition. In addition to lives saved, U.S. investments in integrated health programs, systems, and infrastructure have expanded access to quality care in low- and middle-income countries by facilitating access to routine immunizations, building workforce capacity, and stressing the importance of other essential services, such as access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programs. Now, more than any other time in history, vulnerable populations are more likely to enjoy longer, healthier lives.

Despite tremendous success and progress, global health gains are fragile. Millions of people around the world are still threatened by disease and ongoing health conditions, or live in remote areas where basic health services remain out of reach. Nearly 6 million children under 5 will die from largely preventable causes in 2016, including 2.7 million babies lost in their first month of life. Infectious disease epidemics like Ebola and Zika remind us that in an era of globalization, the U.S. is not immune to diseases that traditionally affect other geographies. Moreover, holistic global health programs that include infection prevention and control as well as treatment will be critical to addressing the threat of antimicrobial resistance and helping to build stronger communities and health systems overall that are more capable of withstanding outbreaks and epidemics. This makes continued U.S. leadership and funding for global health efforts that much more vital.

With focus and vision, investment in global health can help achieve new gains through current U.S. commitments to achieving an AIDS-free generation, ending preventable child and maternal deaths, and building resilient health systems in a sustainable way that leads to graduation from aid. This includes not only expanding existing efforts to reach those in need and deliver critical services, but also harnessing innovation to stimulate research and development for new drugs, vaccines, diagnostics, and devices, as well as finding new and better uses for existing tools.

InterAction Recognizes

- **The U.S. is at the forefront of global health.** U.S. programs have treated more than 9.5 million people living with HIV and prevented transmission to millions more. With U.S. assistance, more than 57 million antimalarial treatments were procured in 2015 and approximately 2.5 million children are saved each year through immunization programs.

- **Continued leadership is necessary to achieve global health goals.** To continue the progress and meet goals in global health, the U.S. must remain committed to strong global health programs that incorporate service delivery, community engagement, technical assistance, capacity building, and research and development.

- **Health is an integral component of overall development efforts and when global health investments are considered in tandem with other development priorities, maximum impact can be made.** Nutrition and food security, gender empowerment, education, and WASH all play a role in ensuring healthy lives for all people at all ages. Investments in these and other core development areas help sustain gains in global health and are critical to building healthy, stable societies.
Upcoming Opportunities

- **The U.S. federal budget process [Ongoing]**: Budget pressures can threaten development gains and jeopardize critical funding—despite broad consensus in Congress, government agencies, and the broader global health community about the critical importance of U.S. global health programs, what is working, and what challenges remain. Forward-thinking and robust funding for bilateral global health programs and U.S. commitments to multilateral efforts—such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance—are critical to sustaining health gains and upholding U.S. leadership.

- **Reaffirm commitment to global health at USAID [Early 2017]**: The transition that will accompany the incoming administration affords a critical opportunity to double-down on USAID’s commitment to global health and related research and development, including supporting innovative initiatives that bring new partners and ideas to the sector. This includes continued support for USAID’s strategic initiatives such as Acting on the Call, the Global Development Lab, the Center for Accelerating Innovation and Impact, and the Grand Challenges for Development, as well as a focus on strengthening health systems. It also should include exploring ways to better integrate and leverage infrastructure and systems of existing U.S. programs, such as the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), to address new and growing health challenges such as noncommunicable diseases or the need for essential surgical care.

- **Strong engagement on the Global Health Security Agenda [Ongoing]**: Recent epidemics of Ebola and Zika highlight the need for coordinated and comprehensive global health programs to make detecting, preventing, and responding to infectious disease threats a key priority. Through multistakeholder partnerships and action packages, the Global Health Security Agenda strengthens the global capacity to respond to infectious disease threats of all forms.

- **PEPFAR reauthorization [2018]**: As of September 2015, PEPFAR had provided antiretroviral treatment for more than 9.5 million HIV-infected persons, supported testing and counseling for 68.2 million people, and provided care for 5.5 million orphans and vulnerable children. To reach the goal of ending AIDS by 2030, these investments must continue. The upcoming reauthorization offers an important opportunity to address restrictions that constrain the ability of the program to reach the most-at-risk-populations, including sex workers and sexually diverse communities. By utilizing and investing in data-driven approaches and evidence-informed practices that deliver rights-affirming health services, Congress can provide comprehensive and quality health care information and services free from stigma and discrimination.

Additional Materials

Investments in global health are not only valuable themselves. They also play an important role in sustaining progress in multiple development sectors, such as WASH, food security, nutrition, education, protection of women and girls, economic growth, and agricultural production.

- Healthy Start: The First Month of Life, 2015, bit.ly/2drVI0D