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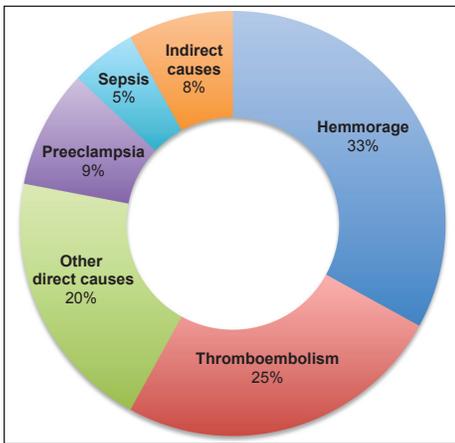
**IRAQ**

**PRIMARY HEALTH CARE PROJECT**

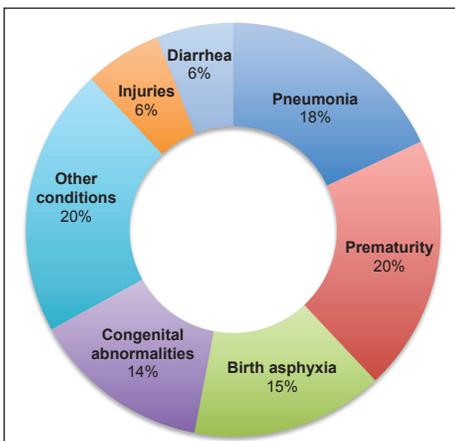
# SUCCESS STORY

## PHC Essential Medicines List Approved by MOH

**PHCPI aims to strengthen the Primary Health Care system, critical for achieving the Ministry of Health’s strategic goal of improved quality of Primary Health Care services and overall healthcare outcomes for Iraq.**



Leading causes of maternal deaths



Leading causes of under - five deaths

Source: PHCPI MDGs 4&5 Bottleneck Assessment 2013

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The Iraqi Ministry of Health is committed to ensuring access to routine, high quality, and equitable healthcare by improving the quality of primary health care (PHC) services throughout Iraq. USAID’s Primary Health Care Project in Iraq (PHCPI) provides support to the Ministry of Health (MOH) to achieve its strategic goal for better quality PHC services. PHCPI helps the MOH put in place key building blocks to support the delivery of quality PHC services at the community and facility levels with a special emphasis on reducing maternal and child mortality which relate directly to Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 4<sup>1</sup> & 5<sup>2</sup>.

One of the ways PHCPI has helped increase the quality of PHC is by revising and updating the essential medicines list (EML) for primary health care centers (PHCCs). Essential medicines, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), are “those drugs that satisfy the health care needs of the majority of the population; they should therefore be available at all times in adequate amounts and in appropriate dosage forms, at a price the community can afford.” The EML should be updated every two years, however, Iraq’s PHCC list had not been updated in many years.

Dr. Mouayad Lutfi, PHCPI’s Health Commodities Specialist, worked along several other PHCPI technical staff and MOH specialized physicians, pharmacists and technical experts from other government institutes to form the 15-member MOH Technical Working Group (TWG). The TWG consulted with MOH Medical Steering Committees and the health program committees (21) involved in the medical services of primary health care services package to establish a new EML for PHCCs throughout Iraq. Through a series of thirteen workshops, an updated list that caters to the needs of the Iraqi people was established. The list contains many new essential and lifesaving medicines that have a crucial impact on the reduction of maternal and child mortality and chronic disease.

Two of the newly added items include Methyl Ergotamine Maleate Ampoule, which is used for the management of postpartum bleeding (hemorrhaging) in pregnant women, which accounts for 33%, or 1,143 maternal deaths each year and Gentamycin Sulfate Injections, used to reduce neonatal sepsis and severe bacterial infection, which account for high numbers of neonatal mortality.

After the finalization of the new EML, the TWG presented the list to the National Board for the Selection of Drugs (NBSD), which represents the MOH’s highest authority for drug selection. After reviewing the list, the NBSD approved and endorsed the new EML for use throughout the Public Health Care facilities in Iraq.

Through collaboration with local stakeholders, USAID’s PHCPI was able to assist the Iraqi MOH in moving closer to achieving MDGs 4 & 5 while supporting the continuous availability of essential drugs and sustainable improvement in health service delivery.