

Maternal and Neonatal Health (MNH) Program

The MNH Program supports increased use of key maternal and newborn health and nutrition interventions in order to reduce maternal and newborn deaths.

Maternal and Neonatal Health (MNH) Program Overview

The MNH Program strives to improve maternal and newborn survival through increased access to, demand for and use of skilled maternal and newborn healthcare services. Our guiding principles are empowerment of women, participation, collaboration, gender sensitivity and equity.

Essential Maternal and Neonatal Care (EMNC) Interventions

Central to the MNH Program philosophy and approach is a broad package of essential maternal and neonatal care (EMNC) interventions that are evidence-based and build on global lessons learned about what works to save the lives of mothers and newborns. EMNC interventions support skilled providers and help to create an enabling environment within a healthcare system that provides necessary drugs and equipment and access to higher levels of care. Essential to EMNC is a core package of key maternal and newborn healthcare services:

- Focused antenatal care
- Birth preparedness
- Complication readiness
- Clean and safe delivery
- Management of obstetric complications
- Care of the normal newborn
- Care of the sick and low birth weight newborn
- Postpartum care

Technical Support for the MNH Program

The MNH Program includes three technical components that support the EMNC core package of maternal and newborn healthcare interventions by promoting actions and strategies in the following areas:

Service Delivery encompasses establishing clinical standards of care, educating and training skilled providers and strengthening service delivery sites through performance improvement interventions.

Behavior Change Interventions promote communication, social mobilization, strengthening enabling environments and client-centered quality improvement interventions.

Policy and Finance focuses on the development, adaptation and use of global standards, advocacy for appropriate policies for maternal and newborn services, financing mechanisms to improve access to maternal and newborn services and costing of various maternal and newborn services.

These technical components form a framework for action and synergistic strategies that build on past lessons, promote supportive policies and partnerships, strengthen the continuum of care and mobilize communities to demand high quality essential maternal and neonatal health services.

Gender is a cross-cutting concern throughout the MNH Program technical components. Gender inequities affect access to and demand for maternal health services

with impacts at the policy, facility, community and household levels. Gender-sensitive design is integral to increasing the quality of clinical and supportive care that the woman receives both in the facility and in the community.

For example, in their efforts to increase skilled care for pregnancy and childbirth, the MNH Service Delivery team focuses on strengthening the performance of the skilled provider and works with the Behavior Change Interventions team and Policy and Finance team to increase the accessibility of, demand for and use of skilled providers. Policy and Finance addresses issues such as establishing standards of care, while Behavior Change addresses motivational and behavioral issues associated with the use of a skilled provider for maternal and newborn healthcare services.

Global Leadership and Country and Regional Programs

As USAID's flagship initiative to increase the use of key maternal and newborn health and nutrition interventions in order to reduce maternal and neonatal deaths, the MNH Program is responsible for integrating and linking two levels of activity. The first, Global Leadership, focuses on the following activities:

- Setting global technical standards for maternal and newborn healthcare in collaboration with key multilateral and bilateral stakeholders

- Mobilizing commitment and strengthening program coordination and collaboration among national and local leaders, multilateral and bilateral stakeholders
- Building on global lessons about care for mothers and newborns
- Identifying, disseminating and scaling up proven, cost-effective interventions
- Identifying global research and evaluation needs to support maternal and newborn survival

The Global Leadership strategy informs and guides the development of the second level of activities, Country and Regional Programs. The country and regional programs reflect the global technical standards and benefit from networking and sharing information, lessons learned and best practices. In each program, interventions are designed to be culturally sensitive, sustainable and appropriate for scaling up for broader impact.

EMNC is at the center of the country and regional programs. Key interventions target birth preparedness and complication readiness in order to empower communities, families and facilities to recognize and respond to obstetric and newborn complications. These programs promote the development of services that are appropriate, timely and practical for low-resource settings.

For more information about the MNH Program visit our website:
www.mnh.jhpiego.org

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