



NEWBORN HEALTH: NURTURING CARE TO SURVIVE AND THRIVE

AUGUST 2024

USAID programs are transformative in helping newborns survive the critical, early weeks after birth when they are most vulnerable to illness and death. Our programs have helped to drive down newborn deaths around the world since 2000, yet 1.9 million babies were stillborn and another 2.3 million died in their first month of life in 2022. Preventable newborn deaths accounted for nearly half of all deaths among children under age five that year.

Operating in tandem with maternal health programs, USAID delivers essential health care services to all newborns and proven interventions to help newborns who are small, sick, or face complications. Through global leadership and country partnerships, USAID champions quality, respectful, and nurturing care that saves lives and helps newborns and their mothers to thrive. These investments accelerate progress toward achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal three's target for newborn mortality, which is to reduce newborn deaths to 12 or fewer per 1,000 live births by 2030.



SINCE 2000,
**NEWBORN DEATHS
HAVE FALLEN
BY 44 PERCENT**
ACROSS USAID'S
25 PRIORITY
COUNTRIES FOR
MATERNAL AND
CHILD SURVIVAL.



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

PRIORITIZING COVERAGE, QUALITY, AND EQUITY

Over the last 20 years, newborn deaths — from causes such as prematurity and birth asphyxia — have become a larger proportion of deaths among children under age five. This calls for greater attention to preventing deaths during the vulnerable newborn period.

USAID supports pregnant women to receive antenatal care throughout their pregnancy and give birth with a respectful, skilled birth attendant — interventions that can prevent stillbirth and ensure newborns get immediate essential care. Prior to and following birth, high quality care can prevent infection, lay the foundation for good nutrition, and identify babies who may need additional interventions. USAID programs strengthen quality throughout the network of care that newborns need, from community health workers, to primary care facilities, to higher-level health facilities that deliver specialized care for newborns with complications. Our approach includes supporting health providers to comply with established clinical standards for essential and special newborn care and promote dignity and respect for newborns and their families.

An expanding focus on the most vulnerable newborns — those who are small and sick, hard to reach, or in fragile settings — is part of USAID's strategy to equitably reach all newborns with essential and special care. Scaling-up community-based and locally-led programs helps identify these newborns and deliver care.

DELIVERING GLOBAL LEADERSHIP, INNOVATION, AND PARTNERSHIP

USAID's expertise on a global scale is influential in shaping international standards for newborn health, such as the World Health Organization's [Every Newborn Action Plan](#) and [Survive and Thrive](#) guidance, and [global guidance for preventing and addressing stillbirth](#). In turn, our programming in countries assists partner governments to implement these guidelines by providing support and resources to turn their commitments into tangible action.

USAID works with private sector partners to boost innovations in medical devices that improve newborn care. For example, tapping into investments from the COVID-19 pandemic response has expanded access to consistent and reliable quality-assured medical oxygen. Getting oxygen quickly and safely can be the deciding factor between life, death, or long-term disability for many newborns, especially those experiencing respiratory distress or other complications at birth. USAID also champions nurturing care to foster positive neurodevelopment so that newborns not only survive, but are nurtured to thrive across their life course.

INVESTING IN ESSENTIAL SERVICES AND PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

The care that mothers and newborns need to safeguard their health is foundational to primary health care. Primary health care delivers essential care for newborns to stay healthy, including routine immunizations and breastfeeding support for their mothers. During these same visits, providers can care for and treat mothers, newborns, and children in the family and counsel on danger signs for illness and home-based practices for care, nutrition, and hygiene, fostering good health for the entire family. When newborns do need special and more advanced clinical interventions, primary care is the entry point for timely referrals and stabilization throughout transfers to specialized care facilities.

USAID NEWBORN HEALTH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

ALL NEWBORNS

- Essential newborn care and postnatal care
- Prevention of stillbirths

SMALL AND/OR SICK NEWBORNS

- Outpatient care, stabilization, referral
- Inpatient special newborn care
- Infant and family-centered care

SYSTEMS OF CARE

- Functional referral network
- Competant human resources
- Equipment and commodities
- Data based decision making



IN 2022, USAID PROGRAMS DELIVERED POSTNATAL CARE TO **11 MILLION BABIES** WITHIN TWO DAYS OF BIRTH.



IN 2022, **246,000 NEWBORNS** NOT BREATHING AT BIRTH WERE RESUSCITATED THROUGH SERVICES SUPPORTED BY USAID.