



Summary

Newborn, Child, and Mother Survival Act of 2009 (H.R.1410)



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Continued U.S. leadership to address newborn, child, and maternal health will greatly impact families in developing countries around the world.

To co-sponsor H.R.1410, please contact:

Lina Choudhry
Office of Rep. Betty McCollum
202.225.6631
lina.choudhry@mail.house.gov

Michelle Brenan
Office of Rep. Dave Reichert
202.225.7761
michelle.brenan@mail.house.gov

The State of Global Newborn, Child, and Maternal Health

Every year, more than 8.8 million children under age five die, mostly from preventable and treatable diseases, while over half a million women die from pregnancy related causes.

- Pneumonia, diarrhea and complications during childbirth are the leading causes of death for more than 24,000 children every day. Poor nutrition is an underlying contributor in up to one-third of these deaths. Neglected tropical diseases also affect over 1 billion individuals around the world, including a significant number of young children and pregnant women.
- An estimated 3.7 million newborns die in the first 28 days of life (more than 40 percent of under-5 deaths).
- Approximately 536,000 women die each year in developing countries from causes related to pregnancy and childbirth, which is equivalent to 1 woman every 60 seconds. A child whose mother dies has a 3 to 10 times greater risk of death than one whose mother survives.

Proven, cost-effective interventions can save the lives of millions of newborns, children, and mothers each year.

- Essential newborn care - including immunizing mothers against tetanus, ensuring clean delivery practices in a hygienic birthing environment, drying and wrapping the baby immediately after birth (providing necessary warmth), and promoting immediate and continued breastfeeding for the first 6 months of life, immunization, and treatment of infections with antibiotics - could save the lives of about 3 million newborns each year.
- Millions of children's lives can be saved through high-impact, low-cost interventions, including oral rehydration therapy (ORT), antibiotics to treat respiratory infections, anti-malaria tablets, and Vitamin A supplements.
- Improved sanitation and access to clean drinking water can reduce childhood infections and diarrhea. Over 40 percent of the world's population does not have access to basic sanitation, and more than one billion people use unsafe sources of drinking water.

- Through the training of skilled birth attendants, the expansion of clinical care and prevention of anemia, and a focus on an effective household to hospital continuum of care that provides timely linkage to referral-level obstetric care, mothers in developing countries can be saved. An additional 700,000 skilled and trained birth attendants and 47,000 doctors with emergency obstetric skills are needed to ensure universal coverage to maternity care.

United States leadership saves lives.

- The United States has joined 188 countries in supporting the Millennium Development Goals for 2015, including the reduction of under-five mortality by two-thirds (goal 4) and the reduction of maternal deaths by three-quarters (goal 5).
- The significant commitment of the United States to reducing child mortality in the developing world contributed to a 50 percent reduction in the mortality of children under the age of 5 between 1960 and 1990. In the past ten years, under-five mortality has dropped by 20 to 50 percent in 15 USAID-assisted countries.

What the Newborn, Child, and Mother Survival Act Would Do

To restore United States leadership in improving the health of newborns, children, and mothers, the Act would:

- Require the United States Government to develop and implement an integrated, comprehensive strategy for reducing mortality and improving newborn, child, and maternal health, with an intentional focus on at least 40 countries with the highest newborn, child, and maternal mortality rates.
- Establish guidelines for child and maternal health programs, including the strengthening of local capacity and self-sufficiency, partnerships with non-governmental organizations, participation by local communities, and coordination with other donors.
- Continue investments in proven, cost-effective international child and maternal health programs, including the Global Vaccines Initiative, UNICEF, and the World Food Programme.
- Authorize a proportional expansion of the Child Survival and Health Grants Program created by Congress to help further American commitment to newborn, child, and maternal health.
- Create an Interagency Newborn, Child, and Maternal Health Task Force to coordinate U.S. Government activities directed toward achieving child and maternal health goals.
- Require the President to submit an annual report to Congress detailing U.S. efforts to reduce mortality and promote the health of newborns, children, and mothers in developing countries.

**for further information,
contact:**

US Coalition for Child Survival

4245 North Fairfax Drive

Suite 850

Arlington, VA 22203

Phone: 703.312.6866

Fax: 703.312.6900

www.child-survival.org