

## **U.S. Agency for International Development Report to Congress on Childhood Cancer for Fiscal Year 2022**

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) submits this report pursuant to Section 7019(e) of Division K of Public Law 117-103, the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2022, which incorporates by reference the requirements of House Report 117-84 and the FY 2022 Joint Explanatory Statement (JES). The FY 2022 JES provides:

*Not later than 90 days after enactment of the Act, the USAID Administrator shall submit a report to the appropriate congressional committees on public-private partnerships to address childhood cancer. The report should provide meaningful analysis of opportunities for such partnerships to strengthen health systems, including in countries that are unable to provide life-saving treatment for childhood cancer.*

USAID has long recognized the value of engaging the private sector in development and humanitarian assistance to help shape solutions that achieve a sustained impact. USAID is building dynamic, mutually beneficial partnerships with companies and investors to advance development progress and address many of the obstacles that businesses face—from supply chain stability to community investment and workforce development. Development and business leaders alike recognize that by collaborating and leveraging each other's unique resources, assets, and skill-set, we can successfully tackle problems together, when individual efforts may be lacking, that neither of us could address alone.

### **USAID Global Health Program (GHP) Activities**

The United States is a leader in the global effort to end preventable child and maternal deaths. In 2014, USAID -- working closely with country partners, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations from around the globe -- began working towards the current Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets of all countries having fewer than 20 deaths per 1,000 live births and fewer than 50 maternal deaths per 10,000 live births by 2035. Meeting these targets will truly represent an end to preventable child deaths.

More than 5.2 million children under the age of five died in 2019, with more than half of these deaths in sub-Saharan Africa. Pneumonia, malaria, and diarrhea continue to be the leading causes of under-five deaths, alongside neonatal conditions. Children dying from these preventable causes often lack access to quality health care, including immunization and safe water. Malnutrition contributes to more than 45 percent of these deaths. Deaths caused beyond the newborn period represent 54 percent of overall under-five mortality, with this proportion reaching 70 percent in some countries. The highest rates of child mortality are in sub-Saharan Africa, and the greatest proportions of post-neonatal deaths are in West and Central Africa.

**USAID Maternal and Child Health Programming:** As noted in the USAID Bureau for Global Health's Acting on the Call reports, the Agency's programs address the **leading causes of mortality in children under five years of age**. In FY 2021, almost 60 percent of USAID's Maternal and Child Health (MCH) funding, or \$490 million, was invested bilaterally, targeted to

25 priority countries with the poorest child and maternal health outcomes. Of these 25 countries, 18 countries, most of them in sub-Saharan Africa, are, unfortunately, not on track to meet SDG targets of a reduction of under-five mortality to equal or less than 25 per 1,000 live births by 2030.

Of USAID's remaining FY 2021 MCH funding, nearly 34 percent, or \$290 million, supports an annual contribution to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance (Gavi), which receives strong support from both the Biden-Harris Administration and Congress. Gavi has demonstrated tremendous success in providing low-income countries with access to vaccines against 17 infectious diseases. In addition, Gavi is making available the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, with impressive results. Nearly all cervical cancers are preventable through vaccination against HPV. By the end of 2020, Gavi had reached more than 7.1 million girls in low-income countries with the HPV vaccine. USAID's efforts, in partnership with Gavi, to expand access to the critical HPV vaccine is an important effort to prevent deaths from this particular cancer.

**USAID's Vision for Health System Strengthening 2030:** USAID provides health system strengthening (HSS) approaches that are based on whole-of-society engagement, locally-driven solutions, and social and behavior change, as included in USAID's Vision for Health Systems Strengthening 2030. USAID's HSS focus is on the health system outcome goals of equity, quality, and resource optimization. HSS partnerships and programs do not solely focus on a specific disease area or age group, but instead are formed to support system-wide improvements (e.g., health workforce performance and productivity, interoperability of information systems, supply-chain management, etc.) to benefit areas of most need depending on the individual country context. USAID's HSS programs support health system functionality and performance, including programs on pharmaceutical system strengthening and ensuring access to quality-assured medicines and products. If the broader health care system is strengthened, this would include strengthened country capacity in equitable, high-quality disease diagnostics and management for many health issues, including childhood cancer.

### **Other Development Assistance (DA) Program Activities**

The Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation often supports private sector partnerships that address childhood cancer through the American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA) Initiative. USAID's ASHA Initiative is a public diplomacy program that demonstrates best practices in U.S. innovation and healthcare services, and increases mutual understanding between the American people and citizens of host countries. ASHA's programs advance U.S. foreign policy objectives by building partnerships between U.S. organizations and Overseas non-governmental organizations to improve community services and support strong civil society institutions as models of stability and good governance. ASHA funding supports improvements in infrastructure and provides durable commodities that allow local organizations to expand their capacity and provide high-quality healthcare services and model U.S. practices. These activities

are designed to improve healthcare institutions, contribute to economic and social progress, and serve as tangible examples of effective development and public diplomacy.

With regard to assistance that currently supports work with childhood cancer, the Jo Ann Medical Center (JAMC) in Tbilisi, Georgia, with ASHA's construction support, is expanding services to establish the first national-scale pediatric hematology-oncology center in Georgia. This program is bringing JAMC and experts from leading U.S. cancer centers together to create a state-of-the-art childhood cancer care facility that will utilize evidence-based medicine and American best practices to comprehensively tackle childhood cancer.

In addition, through ASHA support, the Texas Children's Hospital is providing similar services by establishing a robust pediatric hematology-oncology diagnostic service for the Children's Centre at the Mulago National Referral Hospital in Kampala, Uganda. Children with cancer and hematological diseases, such as sickle cell disease, will receive accurate diagnoses and more effective treatment plans as a result of this effort. Upon completion, this project will benefit public diplomacy between the United States and Uganda by building capacity for the Ugandan healthcare system to support the health of Uganda's youth, and by extension, the future stability of Uganda as a U.S. diplomatic partner.

These are two examples of where U.S. expertise is making a difference in advancing countries' capacity to provide health system strengthening that addresses childhood cancer. By promoting local leadership, and lowering barriers faced by nontraditional partners—including local actors, U.S. small businesses, faith-based organizations, cooperatives, diaspora groups, and civil society organizations, including by making information more accessible about [How to Work with USAID](#), the Agency is continuing to embrace the diverse potential of the partnering community in pursuit of shared development goals.