In February 2016, the World Health Organization declared that clusters of Zika-associated microcephaly and other neurological disorders detected in Brazil constituted a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. USAID is responding to the Zika virus epidemic and its devastating effects in at-risk countries throughout Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). Service delivery is a primary pillar within USAID’s response strategy. Program implementation began in June 2016 and is expected to end by September 2019.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

USAID is protecting vulnerable families from the devastating effects of the Zika virus by ensuring access to quality Zika health services and information, and by building national systems to provide critical care and support resources. In its service delivery work, USAID is strengthening health systems’ and

- Reduce the risk of Zika virus infection and related pregnancy outcomes;
- Screen for and recognize Zika virus infection and negative infant outcomes related to Zika infection during pregnancy; and
- Connect affected families to appropriate care and support services.
PARTNERS

Through the Applying Science to Strengthen and Improve Systems (ASSIST) Project, implemented by University Research Co, USAID is implementing a quality improvement approach to deliver essential health services for women of reproductive age. ASSIST works in nine countries in LAC, directly supporting over 243 health care facilities, and provides technical assistance in additional locations like the Eastern and Southern Caribbean (ESC). ASSIST has also made use of new and low-cost approaches to healthcare capacity building, including telemedicine programs and virtual training courses that have reached over 1,400 providers across six countries.

The Maternal and Child Survival Program (MCSP), implemented by Jhpiego, adapts, develops, and disseminates tools and resources to support identification of and care for Zika-affected infants and their families throughout LAC. In Haiti, MCSP supported the rapid integration of Zika information and messaging into antenatal care services. In the ESC, MCSP is collaborating with Ministries of Health and other stakeholders to provide tailored service delivery support across a range of Zika-related technical areas including infant screening and data collection, post-natal care, and early childhood development.

Population Services International works with private-sector health service providers and pharmacists across LAC to integrate Zika prevention counseling and education into family planning and reproductive health services.

UNICEF is strengthening government and partners’ capacity to reach families affected by Zika with quality non-clinical care and support services. In addition to its work in risk communication and community engagement, UNICEF is advancing policies, guidelines, and tools to support inter-sectoral care and support for families affected by Zika and other congenital disorders.

USAID also supports the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to conduct pregnancy and early childhood development cohort studies to better understand the impact of Zika on mothers and their babies.

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