YEMEN - HEALTH FACT SHEET

USAID supports lifesaving reproductive, maternal, and child health services and a stronger health system to reach the most vulnerable populations in Yemen.

Yemen is suffering the largest humanitarian crisis in the world, exacerbated by its ongoing conflicts. USAID development assistance in Yemen bridges the relief-to-development continuum and strengthens Yemen’s resiliency through programs that stabilize the economy, rebuild basic education and health systems, increase social cohesion, and improve water sector access and management.

In Yemen, 19.7 million people lack access to basic health services. A driving force in the complexity and urgency of Yemen’s humanitarian and health crisis is the current food security crisis. Approximately 16.2 million Yemenis are severely food insecure—the highest number globally. In 2021, more than 400,000 children under the age of five are projected to suffer from severe acute malnutrition, creating irreversible stunting, wasting, and increased mortality due to starvation. An estimated 7.6 million people are in need of nutrition assistance, with 4.7 million people requiring treatment for acute malnutrition.

Less than 50 percent of the health facilities in Yemen are functioning and those that are operational lack specialists, equipment, and basic medicines. These gaps especially impact services for the most vulnerable women and children. Yemen’s maternal mortality ratio is one of the highest in the region at 164 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births. Gender-based violence has also increased by over 17 percent since the onset of conflict six years ago. In addition, the degrading health care system has resulted in vulnerability to and the emergence of diseases that can generally be cured or have been eradicated elsewhere. This ranges from the largest cholera outbreak globally, impacting all but one governorate, to the reemergence of diphtheria, measles, and polio.
The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these issues with a lack of testing, treatment, and reporting capacity; low vaccine supply and vaccine acceptance among the population; and the reduction in use of overall health services contributing to the already significant health care challenges.

**USAID’s Response and Expected Results**

USAID’s new *Yemen Systems, Health, and Resilience Project* (SHARP) works to improve maternal and child health outcomes in Yemen via a multifaceted approach. This includes: building the capacity of health facility staff and community midwives to deliver higher quality care; encouraging community engagement with the formal health system to build trust; improving district health authorities’ management skills; exploring and piloting innovative financing mechanisms to improve access to care; and strengthening Yemen’s health management information system to provide data for decision-makers. USAID health activities are active in Aden, Lahj, and Ta’izz governorates.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, USAID helped authorities to develop health guidelines and protocols, trained health care workers on infection prevention and control measures, and shared awareness and prevention messages through social media, radio, and community outreach. USAID activities have also trained 210 community midwives to improve access to services for women of reproductive age and children under five.

The USAID *Strengthening Family Planning Services in Yemen* project works to increase Yemenis’ access to family planning services in 220 health facilities across Aden, Lahj and Ta’izz governorates. Health facility work complements maternal and child health services already offered with the support of other actors enabling a “one stop shop” for Yemenis to access a wider array of health services. In 2020, the project provided modern contraceptive methods to more than 187,700 women and reported a 400% year-on-year increase in use of FP services from 2019 to 2020.

USAID also supports the World Health Organization (WHO) to detect polio, a highly contagious disease that causes paralysis and sometimes, death. Due to the ongoing conflict and subsequent displacement, many children have been unable to receive the full course of vaccinations, which contain a weakened—but live—virus. In 2020, WHO detected a vaccine-derived polio outbreak in Sa’ada governorate, which prompted additional responses via UNICEF.