



Saving Newborn Lives

ADVOCACY AND POLICY



GOAL

To disseminate information about the status of the newborn and SNL's field experiences and research that support national and global efforts to improve newborn health policies and programs

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Establish newborn mortality reduction as a priority for policymakers committed to the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of reducing mortality rate among children under-five by two-thirds by 2015
- Persuade global policymakers to commit resources to newborn health care in developing countries
- Work in partnership with national leaders, health care professionals, and committed agencies on strengthening national health policies and programs for newborn care

KEY ACTIVITIES

Participate in global partnerships including:

- Collaborating with ministry of health officials and program partners in targeted countries to develop national health policies and integrate care for newborns into existing health programs
- Disseminating accurate information and messages about newborn health to critical audiences and stakeholders

- Maintaining the secretariat for the Healthy Newborn Partnership, an inter-agency group of international development agencies and nonprofit organizations committed to newborn health care

GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS

The Healthy Newborn Partnership (HNP) is an inter-agency group formed in 2000 to promote newborn health in developing countries, particularly in settings where newborn deaths are common. The Partnership works to:

1. Promote attention and action to improve newborn health and survival (the first 28 days of life);
2. Provide a forum for information exchange on programmatic, research, training, and communication issues directly and indirectly related to newborn health; and
3. Partner on collaborative activities.

HNP has an important role in making newborn health a global priority and working with national policymakers and professional health organizations to lay the groundwork for effective policies and programs.

- The HNP launched its global advocacy campaign at UNGASS in 2002 with a policy statement, "Newborn Health: A Time for Action."
- In 2003, the HNP meeting in Dhaka, Bangladesh, led to the "The Dhaka Resolution for Global Newborn

Health” and subsequent policy initiatives by the Bangladesh government (see below).

- The Addis Ababa, Ethiopia meeting of the HNP in 2004 contributed to a region-wide discussion of maternal and newborn health issues in Africa.

Actions Toward the MDGS

Almost 40 percent of deaths among children under-five occur in the first month. Therefore, HNP actively contributes to the global strategy for achieving the UN’s MDGs through messages underscoring the need for increased commitment of resources for newborn health. As articulated in the Addis Ababa Declaration (2004), HNP recommends that global policymakers and national leaders:

- Allocate adequate financial and human resources for newborn, maternal, and child health to reach MDG-4 (to reduce child mortality) and MDG-5 (to improve maternal health);
- Reduce the global burden of neonatal deaths by 50 percent between 2000 and 2015;
- Coordinate efforts to support countries in program development and implementation to improve maternal, newborn, and child health;
- Include neonatal mortality rate (NMR) as an indicator for MDG-4.

NATIONAL ADVOCACY

Bangladesh

The combined efforts of SNL Bangladesh and the HNP have had significant influence on the development of newborn health policies and programs:

- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare added newborn health to its 2003-2006 Strategic Plan, and set a national target to reduce newborn mortality by 25 percent by mid-2006.
- The Bureau of Health Education designed messages and materials—including a training curriculum—on neonatal and perinatal health (from the fourth month of pregnancy to one month after delivery).
- Bangladesh allocated money to train health workers in Essential Newborn Care (ENC), defined as skilled attendance at delivery, temperature maintenance, early and exclusive breastfeeding, basic hygiene, and immunization.
- The management information system (MIS) section of the Ministry of Health began to coordinate facility-based research activities to improve perinatal health in the country.

India

- SNL is working closely with the Government of India, the World Bank and other development agencies to prepare the maternal and newborn health component of India’s \$2 billion reproductive health care program, and also participates in the planning for the integrated management of newborn and child illness (IMNCI) for India.
- The State of India’s Newborns, an SNL report on newborn health in India, will soon be released in collaboration with the Government of India and other lead agencies.

Mali

- SNL’s support for the “First Ladies of West Africa Conference on Maternal and Neonatal Mortality” in May 2001 produced VISION 2010, and led to the June 2004 “Ceremony for Advocacy,” an event to promote newborn and maternal health among West African nations, which SNL co-sponsored.
- The MOH approved the integration of neonatal health as a component of the National Reproductive Health Plan.
- SNL is an active participant in the MOH Task Force to Reduce Maternal and Neonatal Mortality.

Bolivia

- The government has approved plans to extend national health insurance to cover newborn health care.

Malawi

- SNL Malawi’s leadership in Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC), a low-cost measure for the care of low birth weight babies, has resulted in the formation of a national KMC task force to facilitate the development of national guidelines and policy for this critical newborn health intervention.

Nepal

- In January 2004, the Government of Nepal officially endorsed and adopted the National Newborn Health Strategy, which was developed under the leadership of SNL.

Vietnam

- SNL’s report on the status of newborn and maternal health in Vietnam spurred national recognition. A Ministry of Health Directive on Newborn Health—Vietnam’s first-ever on newborns—requires each province to formulate plans for improved newborn health services.

Pakistan

- SNL worked to develop a national commitment for newborn health policy and community-based midwifery program with partners and Ministry of Health officials.

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SAVING NEWBORN LIVES INITIATIVE

Saving Newborn Lives, supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, is a 15-year global initiative to improve the health and survival of newborns in the developing world. Saving Newborn Lives works with governments, local communities and partner agencies in developing countries to make progress toward real and lasting change in newborn health.

SAVE THE CHILDREN is a leading international nonprofit child-assistance organization working in over 40 countries worldwide, including the United States. Our mission is to make lasting positive change in the lives of children in need. Save the Children is a member of the international Save the Children Alliance, a worldwide network of 30 independent Save the Children organizations working in more than 100 countries to ensure the well-being and protect the rights of children everywhere.