

Support Full Funding for Maternal and Child Health, Gavi, and Nutrition in Global Health in FY2021

*****The closing date for this letter is TBD, waiting on Committee for deadlines *****

Dear Colleague,

Please join us in sending a letter to the State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee calling for robust funding for the global Maternal and Child Health Account, including GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance, and the Nutrition Account in Global Health in fiscal year 2021. The text of the letter is below.

For additional information, or to sign onto the letter, please contact Libby Foley (McCollum) at Libby.Foley@mail.house.gov or Sam West (Brooks) at Sam.West@mail.house.gov. We will set a deadline as soon as the Committee on Appropriations releases its deadlines. Thank you.

Sincerely,

BETTY McCOLLUM
Member of Congress

SUSAN W. BROOKS
Member of Congress

BARBARA LEE
Member of Congress

BRIAN FITZPATRICK
Member of Congress

LETTER TEXT:

Dear Chair Lowey and Ranking Member Rogers:

As you begin consideration of the Department of State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill for fiscal year (FY) 2021, we strongly urge you to allocate \$900 million for the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) account—including \$290 million for GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance—and an additional \$200 million for the Nutrition account. This funding is critical to preserving effective, evidence-based, poverty-focused assistance that saves lives and helps strengthen economies in developing countries.

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) MCH and Nutrition programs form the backbone of the U.S. commitment to help end preventable child and maternal deaths globally. While reductions in global mortality rates for women and children are two of the biggest success stories in international development, there remain significant gaps that additional investments and continued U.S. support can help close.

For example, in 2018 over 5.3 million children under the age of five died from mainly preventable and treatable diseases. A growing proportion of under-five deaths occur in the first 28 days after birth, with approximately 7,000 newborns dying each day. And while deaths from illnesses such as malaria, and HIV have dropped significantly, progress in preventing deaths from pneumonia and diarrhea have been much slower, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. While there are vaccines to prevent the deadliest cases, pneumonia and diarrheal diseases are still leading killers for children under five. Finally, recent estimates suggest that more than 300,000 women continue to die annually of preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth, almost all in low-resource settings.

To continue progress and address these persistent challenges, MCH programs support the delivery of low-cost, proven, life-saving services in 25 priority countries where the burden of preventable deaths is the highest. USAID's generous investments help provide access to skilled birth attendants and emergency obstetric care; training for frontline health workers; clean water, sanitation, and hygiene; life-saving health commodities; and research and development of innovative tools.

A critical portion of the MCH account supports GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance, which provides new and underutilized vaccines to developing countries. This public-private partnership has enabled the immunization of 760 million children since 2000, saving over an estimated 13 million lives. GAVI recently launched its third replenishment with an ambitious goal of immunizing an additional 300 million children by 2025. Continued U.S. support of this partnership is critical to help save up to 8 million lives.

The Nutrition account supports nutrition-specific programs for women and children, focusing on the first 1,000 days between pregnancy and a child's second birthday. These programs can make a tremendous impact on a child's ability to learn and, later on in life, secure employment and provide for their families as healthy adults. Absent quality nutrition and early intervention health services, a child's physical and cognitive development is at risk of being stunted. Almost a quarter of the world's children never reach their full earning, social, and economic potential because of this. U.S. leadership in support of nutrition is particularly critical this year to bolster global commitments to scale up this important intervention.

Again, we urge you to allocate \$900 million for MCH and \$200 million for Nutrition programs in FY21, along with continued support for other programs that contribute to the health and well-being of families and communities in developing countries. We look forward to working with you to ensure that the United States maintains its leadership in this global effort.

Sincerely,

BETTY McCOLLUM
Member of Congress

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