



Access to Global Family Planning and Reproductive Health Services

U.S. leadership is critical to making global voluntary family planning and reproductive health (FP/RH) services more widely available. By increasing funding and changing policies, the next administration and Congress can help ensure that millions of women and men worldwide have access to the voluntary FP/RH services they desire.

More than 200 million women of reproductive age worldwide want to space or end childbearing but lack sufficient access to family planning or reproductive health services¹.

The U.S. has been a world leader in international FP/RH:

- The United States has supported family planning, reproductive health, and population programs as part of its foreign assistance program since 1965 and remains the leader among donor nations in both technical and financial terms. However, in the last decade, the U.S. has decreased its annual overseas development assistance for FP/RH by 39% since its highest level in 1995.²
- A U.S. Senate committee recently noted that “...stresses on woefully inadequate social services in many developing countries caused by high rates of population growth... contribute to competition for limited resources, environmental degradation, malnutrition, poverty and conflict. Assisting countries in reducing rates of population growth to sustainable levels should be a priority of USAID.”³

Family planning and reproductive health services save the lives of women and children. Ensuring universal access to FP/RH will help achieve the health Millennium Development Goals and will help reduce disease and mortality:

- There are up to 200 million women who would like to space or limit their child bearing but currently lack sufficient access to voluntary family planning. Increasing access such services could reduce maternal mortality by 31% and reduce infant mortality by 22%.⁴
- Incorporating family planning services in mother-to-child-transmission (MTCT) programs would prevent twice the number of child HIV infections and three times the number of child deaths than MTCT programs alone.⁵
- By preventing unintended pregnancies, contraceptive services can avert 30% more HIV positive births than administering drugs to pregnant mothers at the same cost.⁶
- Between 1999 and 2006, access to family planning services helped prevent more than 10 times the number of HIV-infected pediatric cases in Sub-Saharan Africa than did the provision of ARV drugs to pregnant mothers.⁷



The next administration and Congress can help increase access to these life-saving and essential FP/RH services by:

- **Increasing US support for international family planning.** U.S. interactions with other donors and with multilateral institutions should note that expanded access to family planning and contraceptive services can lead to concrete, cost-effective, and measurable global health improvements. Over the next four years, Congress and the Administration should increase federal support for international FP/RH programs to \$1 billion annually. Research suggests that each additional \$100 million spent on family planning would result in:
 - 3.6 million more contraception users
 - 2.1 million unintended pregnancies avoided
 - 825,000 fewer abortions
 - 970,000 fewer unplanned births
 - 70,000 infant deaths averted
- **Issuing new guidance on the use of PEPFAR funds** to allow access to contraceptives by those HIV positive women who wish to avoid becoming pregnant.
- **Modifying existing limits on procurement of contraceptive products** (“buy USA”) to a standard permitting cost-effective purchasing of appropriate products from non-U.S. sources (as was similarly codified by Congress in the reauthorization of PEPFAR with respect to cost-effective drug purchasing for AIDS).
- **Encouraging the G-8 countries and new and emerging donors** to fulfill the pledge made at the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development in 1994 and to meet the MDG goal and make FP/RH universally available by 2015.

To learn more, see:

- Guttmacher Institute: [http:// www.guttmacher.org](http://www.guttmacher.org)
- Population Action International: <http://www.populationaction.org>
- Population Reference Bureau: <http://www.prb.org/>
- United National Population Fund: <http://www.unfpa.org>
- World Health Organization: http://www.who.int/topics/family_planning/en/ and http://www.who.int/topics/reproductive_health/en/

¹ Population Action International: "<http://www.populationaction.org>"

² Population Action International

³ Senate Report 110-425, Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Bill, 2009

⁴ Vlassoff M. et al., “Adding It Up: The Benefits of Investing in Sexual and Reproductive Health Care,” Guttmacher Institute, 2004

⁵ Population Action International Statement on PEPFAR Authorization, Feb. 19, 2008

⁶ Family Health International, Ward Cates, President

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