

Mexico City Policy

September 10, 2001

Dear Colleague:

In announcing the restoration of the Mexico City Policy, President Bush acknowledged that voluntary family planning services were one of the best ways to prevent abortion. The U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Population, Health and Nutrition Center places high priority on preventing abortions through the use of family planning, saving the lives of women who suffer complications arising from unsafe abortion, and linking those women to voluntary family planning and other reproductive health services that will help prevent subsequent abortions. Postabortion care should be a key component of both our Safe Motherhood and family planning programs.

It is timely to remind our field officers and Cooperating Agencies (CAs) of the Administration's support for postabortion care. The press release accompanying President Bush's Memorandum of January 22, 2001 restoring the Mexico City Policy stated that "[t]he President's clear intention is that any restrictions do not limit organizations from treating injuries or illnesses caused by legal or illegal abortions, for example, postabortion care."

Globally, complications following an unsafe abortion account for 13 percent of all maternal deaths. Many of these deaths could be prevented by postabortion care.

USAID's postabortion care program includes three critical elements: emergency treatment for complications of induced or spontaneous abortion; postabortion family planning counseling and services; and linking women from emergency care to family planning and other reproductive health services.

USAID will continue to support postabortion care activities, and foreign organizations are permitted to implement such activities without affecting their USAID family planning assistance. It should be noted that USAID does not finance the purchase or distribution of manual vacuum aspiration equipment for any purpose.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the Missions, Bureaus and Center staff that have promoted postabortion care in their programs. The Population, Health and Nutrition Center is very proud of the technical achievements made by Missions, CAs and their host country colleagues. Much work remains to be done in the areas of policy development, training and service delivery, operations research and community involvement in order to expand and improve much needed postabortion care services.

We encourage you to support postabortion care activities in your programs. Monica Kerrigan (mkerrigan@usaid.gov) and Nicole Buono (nbuono@usaid.gov) chair the Agency's Postabortion Care Working Group. If you or your staff have any questions regarding the development or implementation of postabortion care activities, please do not hesitate to contact them.

Sincerely,
Duff Gillespie
Deputy Assistant Administrator
Population, Health and Nutrition Center