



News Release



Office of Public Affairs

U.S. Embassy

USAID, Punjab Government fund 450 Community Midwifery Students

Lahore, May 8, 2007 – The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Government of Punjab have enrolled 450 students in a new community midwifery training program that will bring skilled birth attendants to rural areas of the Punjab.

“Health is one of the public goods that Pakistanis must possess in order to build a prosperous nation. Healthy mothers and healthy children are Pakistan’s future,” said Mr. Bryan Hunt, the US Consulate Lahore’s Principal Officer, while speaking at the announcing of new enrolment on International Day of the Midwife at the Institute of Public Health here today.

While congratulating the Government of Punjab for its efforts to care for mothers and newborns, the American diplomat urged a continued increase in health expenditures in maternal and child health.

The USAID-funded Pakistan Initiative for Mothers and Newborns (PAIMAN) Project is working with the Punjab Department of Health to enroll students and prepare them to deliver babies safely in their own communities. The students must conduct at least 25 supervised deliveries before they can graduate from their 18-month course.

“Through health sector reforms, the Government of Punjab is ensuring basic emergency obstetric and newborn care facilities available at the doorsteps of the people,” Chaudhary Mohammad Iqbal, Minister for Health, Government of Punjab, said. He stressed that the Government of Punjab is committed to reduce maternal, newborn and infant mortality.

Since nearly 80 percent of Pakistani women deliver their babies at home, this new cadre of health workers will be a vital resource to safeguard mother and newborn health. Working in ten districts throughout Pakistan, PAIMAN is supporting the training of 1,500 new community midwives and preparing staff of 31 facilities to provide emergency care in refurbished, better equipped labor wards.

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