

WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' HEALTH

“When a girl becomes a mother before she becomes literate, when a woman gives birth alone and is left with a permanent disability, when a mother toils daily to feed her large family but cannot convince her husband to agree to contraception, these struggles represent suffering that can and should be avoided. They represent potential that goes unfulfilled. And they also represent an opportunity to extend critical help to women worldwide and the children who depend on them.”

-- Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton, January 2010

The President's Global Health Initiative (GHI) puts women and girls at the center of U.S. global health strategy. The GHI provides robust new funding and a strategic approach to maternal, newborn and child health, family planning and nutrition, and specifically targets barriers to health care for women and girls. Women and children face severe challenges to their health, have more limited access to quality health care, and bear a disproportionately greater share of disease, violence and mistreatment. Global rates of maternal mortality remain perilously high, with hundreds of thousands of deaths each year, and millions of women suffer from debilitating pregnancy-related injuries, diseases, and infections. More than 215 million women lack access to modern forms of contraception and are therefore unable to regulate their fertility.

The consequences of a mother's death ripple throughout her family and community. For example, when a mother dies, the chances of her child dying within 12 months increase sevenfold.

Women's and Girls' Health

Investments to improve the health and lives of women and girls will target:

- **Maternal, Newborn and Child Health:** Support delivery of key maternal, newborn, and child health services, such as pre- and post-natal care, nutrition, essential newborn care, and immunization. Address important determinants of women's and girls' health, such as gender-based violence, educational attainment, and economic opportunity.
- **Fistula:** Support efforts to prevent fistula, such as improving access to skilled birth attendants during delivery and conducting awareness-raising campaigns at the community level. Provide treatment and care for women and girls suffering from fistula and supporting efforts for their rehabilitation and reintegration back into society once they are healed.

