

MATERNAL MORTALITY: Saving Women's Lives Globally

BY THE NUMBERS

8 million

Every year nearly 8 million women suffer pregnancy-related complications that put them at risk for maternal death

300,000

Nearly 300,000 women die globally each year as a result of complications related to pregnancy and childbirth

99%

Worldwide, 99% of maternal deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries

The Issue

Maternal mortality worldwide declined about 50% between 1990 and 2013; however, few countries with high maternal mortality rates have achieved the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of a 75% reduction in maternal mortality.

Although conditions have improved in many parts of the world, many women in developing countries still die in childbirth or from pregnancy-related causes. The vast majority of these deaths can be prevented through relatively low-cost interventions, like improving access to information and quality care before and after pregnancy, emergency care, and referral and transport services.

"The first phase of Saving Mothers, Giving Life demonstrated that a comprehensive set of interventions could dramatically and rapidly reduce maternal mortality in low resource settings. The findings from Phase 2 are promising: maternal mortality has continued to decline and there have been sustained improvements in access to lifesaving obstetric surgical services."

Tom Frieden, MD, MPH, CDC Director

CDC's Response

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) evaluates programs and helps track and understand the causes of maternal death through surveillance and data analysis. Current activities include:

- **Saving Mothers, Giving Life (SMGL):** SMGL is a public-private partnership designed to rapidly reduce the number of deaths due to complications of pregnancy and childbirth. Working in three countries in sub-Saharan Africa — which has the highest levels of maternal mortality — CDC provides technical assistance to increase demand for and improve the quality of services.

Low-cost interventions have improved maternal mortality rates worldwide.



CDC's Response (continued)

- **Maternal Death Surveillance and Response (MDSR):** MDSR promotes routine identification and timely notification of maternal deaths, review of maternal deaths, and monitoring of steps to prevent similar deaths in the future. CDC is partnering with the World Health Organization to provide assistance in several sub-Saharan African countries to develop and implement MDSR, and is working with ministries of health to effectively implement MDSR in their respective countries.
- **Maternal mortality reduction in Tanzania:** CDC is partnering with Bloomberg Philanthropies to reduce maternal deaths in the Kigoma Region of northwestern Tanzania by improving the quality and availability of emergency services for women during and after pregnancy. CDC is assessing the intervention's impact in preventing maternal deaths and improving pregnancy outcomes.

Our Partners

- Bloomberg Philanthropies
- United Nations Population Fund
- U.S. Agency for International Development
- World Health Organization

For further information, please visit:

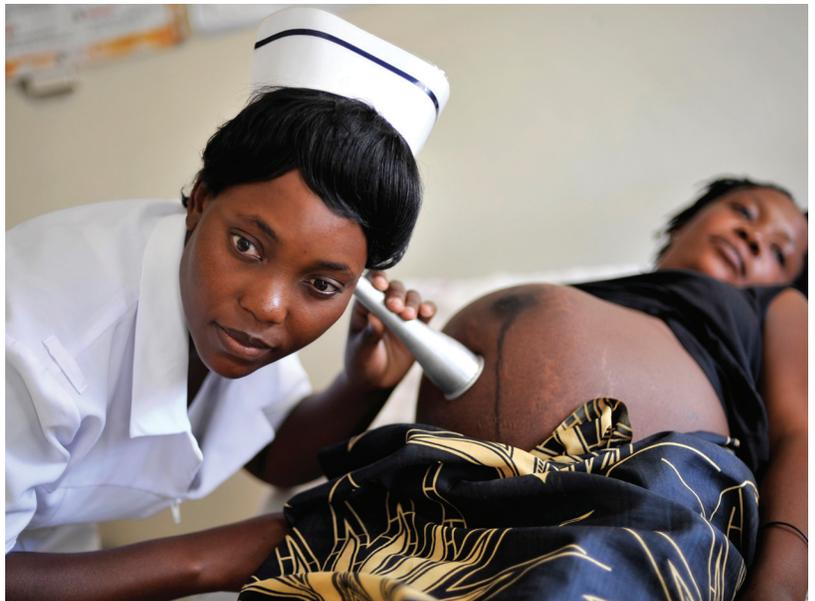
Saving Mothers, Giving Life:
<http://www.savingmothersgivinglife.org>

Maternal Death Surveillance and Response:
http://www.who.int/maternal_child_adolescent/documents/maternal_death_surveillance/en

CDC Global Reproductive Health:
<http://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/global>



Zambia is one of the sub-Saharan African countries with a high maternal mortality rate.



Woman receives pre-natal exam in Zambia.

Photos courtesy of Racardo Gangale (2013).