



Frequently Asked Questions

Q1: What is *Mothers Day Every Day*?

A: *Mothers Day Every Day* is a campaign to raise awareness and advocate for greater U.S. leadership to save the lives of the women and newborns who die due to lack of basic health care that is taken for granted by most women in the world today. *Mothers Day Every Day* is uniting the efforts of high profile leaders from all walks of life who see U.S. leadership as critical to support global efforts to improve maternal and newborn health and reduce maternal mortality and morbidity (disability). By promoting healthy moms and newborns, *Mothers Day Every Day* recognizes the opportunity to strengthen families and communities who benefit from their love, guidance, care and productive potential. The campaign believes that empowering women – beginning with a healthy pregnancy and safe childbirth – is the key to greater overall global health, self-sufficiency, economic growth and peaceful sustainability. In short, when women survive childbirth, they give birth to healthier families, communities and nations.

Q2: What is the goal of the campaign?

A: The bold but achievable aim of *Mothers Day Every Day* is to generate the political will and action toward the key Millennium Development Goal of reducing maternal mortality by 75 percent by 2015. The vast majority of women's lives can be saved each year through basic, low-cost interventions already proven effective in developing countries. We know what works. Political will is needed. *Mothers Day Every Day* calls on the United States to renew its leadership and strengthen the global community by increasing our investment in proven, cost-effective interventions, such as family planning, skilled care at birth, emergency obstetric care and pre- and post-natal care. The U.S. must also support strengthening health systems, including addressing the challenges related to ensuring the availability of skilled health workers. Together these investments will ensure that women and their babies have access to quality lifesaving care before, during and after childbirth.

Q3: Why is maternal mortality an important issue to focus on right now?

A: Every minute somewhere in the world a woman dies needlessly due to the complications of pregnancy and childbirth. Ninety-nine percent of maternal deaths occur in developing countries. More than 80 percent are avoidable if women have access to quality health care. When mothers die, their families, communities and nations suffer an immeasurable loss. While there has been significant progress on other global health issues, such as addressing HIV and AIDS, improvements in maternal health have remained relatively stagnant over the past two decades. In many parts of the world, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, the risk of a woman dying as the result of pregnancy and childbirth over lifetime remains extremely high at 1 in 22 women, as compared to 1 in 4,800 in the United States.

Maternal mortality represents one of the greatest health disparities between rich and poor countries and between the rich and poor populations within a country. At a time when the world's people are looking to the United States for renewed leadership, increased support for maternal health as key to achievement of global health and economic stability will demonstrate our fundamental belief that every individual deserves the opportunity for a healthy life.



The *Mothers Day Every Day* campaign also builds on the global recognition that progress on the Millennium Development Goal related to maternal mortality is lagging far behind other MDGs, yet MDG 5 is critical to meeting the other MDGs; immediate action is essential to meeting this global commitment.

Q4: Who is launching *Mothers Day Every Day*?

A: The White Ribbon Alliance for Safe Motherhood (WRA) and CARE have partnered to spearhead *Mothers Day Every Day* as a campaign uniting a diverse coalition of global health, economic development and human rights advocates to speak with one voice. WRA and CARE are building on the momentum generated last year when the House and Senate passed resolutions calling for the United States to make a stronger commitment to reduce maternal mortality at home and abroad. Already, an impressive group of nationally-recognized civic leaders – including Donna Shalala, Former Secretary, U.S. Health and Human Services and current President, the University of Miami; Maria Cino, President and CEO, Republican National Convention 2008; Mark Dybul, Ambassador; and Elsa Walsh, Journalist – have joined the *Mothers Day Every Day* Advisory Committee.

Q5: What is the global impact of this many mothers dying?

A: Mothers play a fundamental role in the physical, social and economic health of their families, communities and nations. Each year an estimated U.S. \$15.5 billion in potential productivity is lost when mothers and newborns die. If the newborn survives into infancy, they are more likely to die within 2 years of a maternal death. Their siblings are more likely to die by age 5. At the same time, when a mother dies, enrollment in school for younger children is delayed and older children often leave school to support their family; this burden typically falls on the girl children. Children without a mother are less likely to be immunized, and are more likely to suffer from malnutrition and stunted growth. When mothers die, their families, communities and nations must carry a heavier burden that often requires assistance from those with greater resources. Progress made to reduce child mortality, combat HIV/AIDS and promote economic development is jeopardized. Human rights initiatives are compromised.

Q6: What are some proven interventions to save mother's lives?

A: Evidence is conclusive that the vast majority of maternal deaths and injuries are preventable with simple, affordable measures. Even in the poorest communities, when women get vital care – like family planning, skilled birth attendance and emergency care – they and their newborns live through the complications of pregnancy and childbirth. Maternal mortality is an indicator of a government's failure to meet people's most basic needs, including a functioning health system. The World Health Report (2005) estimated that a package of maternal health services costing less than U.S. \$1.50 per person could make significant improvements in women's health in the 75 countries where 95 percent of maternal and child deaths occur.

Q7: Have successes already been documented?

A: Increasing access to life-saving interventions is possible and the global community is already seeing signs of success. In parts of Asia, the proportion of women who have a skilled attendant present during delivery increased from 31 to 41 percent between 1995 and 2005. Increases have also been seen in many African countries. Some countries, including low-income countries, have successfully reduced maternal mortality. Successes in countries like Romania, Thailand, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Egypt and Honduras stem from a number of factors, including increasing access to hospital and midwifery care, improving quality of care and controlling infectious diseases.