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CREATING A HEALTHIER ETHIOPIA

“The first wealth is health.” – *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Despite major health improvements over the last decade, preventable deaths from infectious diseases and lack of quality health services are still common in Ethiopia, exacerbated by the country’s high population growth rate; limited access to quality health services, clean water and sanitation; and poor nutrition. Strengthening the health system, increasing the number of trained healthcare providers, improving healthcare infrastructure and supply chain systems, and reducing costs to patients will improve healthcare service delivery and increase use of the system.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT FOR ETHIOPIA

Increased use of quality, high-impact services supported by strong systems is necessary to reduce maternal, neonatal and child deaths, and decrease the incidence of major infectious diseases such as HIV, TB and malaria. Healthy people have the capacity to be resilient, productive participants of society, and are able to contribute to—rather than be a burden on—the economy.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT FOR THE UNITED STATES

The U.S. Government is committed to saving lives, preventing suffering, promoting health as a basic right, creating a brighter future for families, and reducing the transmission of diseases within Ethiopia and beyond. We are the biggest donor in health in Ethiopia—our consistent support for Ethiopia’s health system over the last 15 years has saved millions of lives. Since 1990, the number of children who die every year has been reduced by two thirds. The number of mothers who die in labor has dropped 50 percent. The risk of dying from malaria, TB or HIV has declined. And families are able to determine the number of children they want

PHOTO: AMY FOWLER, USAID

to have. Good health and strong families and communities build strong and resilient societies that have the potential to lessen societal grievances, mitigating the risks for violent conflict. We have helped create a healthier Ethiopia that can now focus on educating its children, creating jobs, improving incomes and becoming a stronger Ethiopia.

PROGRAMMING

FAMILY PLANNING AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH: At the current rate of more than four births per woman, Ethiopia will add 40 million people to its current population of 104 million over the next 15 years. We support improving access to family planning services and contraceptives so that men and women have the ability to decide the size of their family and women can have safer pregnancies.

HEALTH SYSTEM STRENGTHENING: We support critical elements of the health system; such as training doctors, nurses, and other health care workers; diversifying health care financing to include a health insurance system; and improving the country's supply chain and data management systems.

HIV/AIDS: More than 722,000 people in Ethiopia live with HIV. The goal of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) is to ensure that there are comprehensive prevention programs to prevent the spread of HIV, care and treatment services for people living with HIV, and community programs that support children vulnerable to, or orphaned by HIV.

MALARIA: Malaria is the leading cause of illness in Ethiopia. With support from the President's Malaria Initiative, outpatient malaria illnesses have declined by more than 48 percent and severe malaria illnesses have declined by more than 62 percent since 2004. We will continue to expand proven prevention and treatment activities to reduce malaria-related illness by 50 percent.

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH: Approximately 300,000 children die from preventable diseases each year in Ethiopia. In a country where most people live far from clinics and hospitals, we have helped build a cadre of 38,000 community health workers who live and work in rural areas. These workers provide crucial health services for mothers and children so that children do not die from malaria and common illnesses.

TUBERCULOSIS: With our comprehensive support, Ethiopia has achieved remarkable results. Our TB program aims to find TB cases early, improve access to quality services for diagnosis and management of TB, enhance private sector involvement, and expand universal access to the directly observed treatment, with special emphasis on preventing and treating drug resistant forms of TB.

WATER, SANITATION, AND HYGIENE: Nearly half of all Ethiopians get their daily water from unclean water sources, and only 15 percent of Ethiopians have access to improved toilet facilities. Our activities ensure that people have access to clean and safe drinking water, sanitation products and services, and we encourage people to wash their hands with soap, safely dispose of excreta, and exercise proper food hygiene and safe water storage at home.

EMERGENCY HEALTH: In times of emergencies—such as drought—when people do not have enough to eat or access to water, we help make sure that children have access to food and health services and that communities have access to clean safe water.