Still millions of children around the world do not receive all recommended vaccines, leaving them vulnerable to preventable diseases. In 2015, 5.9 million children under the age of five died. Many of these deaths could have been prevented by access to vaccines.

Vaccines are one of the most effective public health interventions of all time—especially in low- and middle-income countries, where many families cannot find or afford health care when their children get sick. Vaccines save 2 to 3 million lives every year and prevent debilitating diseases that make it difficult for children to thrive and reach their full potential. They are among the most cost-effective health interventions, with an economic return of 16 to 44 times the investment.

PATH is partnering with US agencies to close the immunization gap and save lives by creating partnerships that expand access to existing vaccines, drive the development of new ones, and improve technology so vaccines are delivered safely and effectively.
US INVESTMENT

The United States has a long history of leadership in immunization through international collaboration, research, and technical contributions. It is important for the United States to maintain its existing financial and technical commitments across the spectrum of activities in global immunization to help end unnecessary suffering and death from preventable illnesses.

Health and Human Services (HHS)

HHS agencies play a key role in designing programs and providing technical support for vaccine development and regulatory assistance.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) partnered in the Measles and Rubella Initiative, one of the world’s most successful public health partnerships, to support vaccinations for children, which led to a 79 percent reduction in measles deaths worldwide.1

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has developed a number of vaccine candidates for dengue fever—a painful, debilitating disease—that have been licensed to manufacturers and show promising results for new vaccine candidates in the near future.

Experts from the Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research, through the African Vaccine Regulatory Forum, help developing countries monitor clinical trials in their countries and assess clinical data to facilitate the licensure process and speed vaccines to licensure.

US Agency for International Development (USAID) and Department of State

Support for immunization is a key strategy toward achieving USAID’s goal of ending preventable maternal and child deaths within a generation.

Since 2009, USAID has provided technical assistance to 22 countries for routine immunization strengthening and to 13 countries for new vaccine introduction. USAID also supports R&D of new vaccines and delivery technologies.

USAID is a major contributor to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. Founded in 2000 to fund vaccines for children in the world’s poorest countries, Gavi has enabled 500 million children to be immunized against deadly diseases, preventing an estimated 7 million deaths.2

The World Health Organization (WHO), an international organization supported by the US Department of State, administers the Expanded Programme on Immunization, which has prevented millions of deaths every year through national immunization programs.3

The State Department supports the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), which is the largest buyer of vaccines in the world. In 2014, UNICEF procured 2.7 billion doses of vaccine, reaching 40 percent of the world’s children.4

Department of Defense (DoD)

DoD conducts research into developing new vaccines to protect service members, address critical global health challenges, and contribute to stable societies abroad. DoD projects led to the first clinical trial of a promising vaccine candidate and contributed to the development of the most clinically advanced malaria vaccine candidate, RTS,S, which has been recommended by the WHO for large-scale pilot implementations.

Impact

The MenAfriVac® vaccine to prevent meningitis A was developed through a groundbreaking partnership among governments, international organizations, and private groups. The CDC, NIH, and FDA, in conjunction with PATH, WHO, and the Serum Institute of India Ltd., developed, manufactured, and deployed the MenAfriVac vaccine to prevent deadly meningitis A outbreaks in record time and at less than one-tenth of the cost of a typical new vaccine.5

MenAfriVac is a registered trademark of Serum Institute of India Pvt. Ltd.

Since the launch of the MenAfriVac vaccine in 2010, more than 235 million people have been immunized and meningitis A has virtually disappeared from vaccinated areas.

With support from USAID, PATH and TempTime Corporation identified and developed an innovative way to monitor temperature-sensitive vaccines for heat damage. The vaccine vial monitor (VVM) changes color as it is exposed to heat, allowing health workers to know whether the vaccines can still be used or have been exposed to too much heat and should be discarded. Over the last 20 years, more than 6 billion VVMs have been used, helping to ensure vaccines are still potent when they are delivered and saving the global health community approximately US$14 million each year by preventing the discard of undamaged vaccines.6


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