

112TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 734

Recognizing the importance of frontline health workers toward accelerating progress on global health and saving the lives of women and children, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 18, 2012

Mrs. LOWEY submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the
Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the importance of frontline health workers toward accelerating progress on global health and saving the lives of women and children, and for other purposes.

Whereas United States investment in maternal and child health has resulted in dramatic successes, reducing under-5 preventable child deaths from 12 million in 1990 to 7.6 million in 2010;

Whereas strong health systems and access to health care in developing countries are vital for these successes to continue and to ensure that the United States investment in global health programs is most effective;

Whereas millions of families live beyond the reach of hospitals and clinics and can only be served by frontline

health workers, who are the backbone of effective health systems;

Whereas frontline health workers provide families with access to a range of simple, affordable, life-saving care to help prevent and treat infections, improve nutrition, increase coverage of vaccines, ensure healthy outcomes for mothers and newborns, and fight diseases like tuberculosis, malaria, and HIV;

Whereas frontline health workers deliver advice and services to patients in their homes and in clinics, serving as councilors, educators, and treatment providers, and are the first and often the only point of contact to the health care system for millions of people, especially in remote and rural areas;

Whereas, according to the World Health Organization, there are 57 countries with critical health workforce shortages, most of which are in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, regions that also have the greatest share of the global disease burden and the highest number of preventable deaths;

Whereas, despite the key role of frontline health workers, the World Health Organization estimates a shortage of at least 1 million frontline health workers to achieve the 2015 Millennium Development Goals;

Whereas the impact of investments in frontline health workers has been well documented, such as in Ethiopia where a commitment to investing in frontline health workers led to a doubling of the rates of young children who have been immunized, treated for pneumonia, and been given Vitamin A to prevent blindness, and in Malawi, where

under-5 child deaths have been reduced 59 percent since 1990;

Whereas partnerships with the private sector in training, equipping, and deploying frontline health workers have helped countries achieve progress on global health goals;

Whereas, despite gains in access to health care, 1 billion of the world's nearly 7 billion people will never visit a health worker, including 350 million children;

Whereas every day more than 20,000 children in the developing world perish, mostly from preventable causes, and 800 women die due to pregnancy complications, and every year, millions of adults succumb to the ravages of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and other treatable and preventable chronic diseases;

Whereas the presence of trained and supported frontline health workers is key to the success of United States global health programs and, in particular, key to reducing maternal and child deaths, as they are one of the most cost-effective ways to save lives;

Whereas training frontline health workers helps to develop sustainable local capacity and strengthens and rebuilds health systems in a country because frontline health workers are drawn from the communities they serve and are less likely to migrate than higher skilled categories of health workers; and

Whereas, despite the importance of health workers to successful implementation of United States global health programs and to improved health outcomes for those served by these programs, the United States does not have a comprehensive health workforce strategy: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) reaffirms the important role of frontline
3 health workers in saving lives and fostering a
4 healthier, more secure, and more prosperous world;

5 (2) commends the progress made by the United
6 States in helping to build local capacity and to save
7 lives in the world’s most vulnerable communities by
8 training and supporting frontline health care work-
9 ers; and

10 (3) calls on all relevant Federal agencies, in-
11 cluding the United States Agency for International
12 Development, the Department of State, and the Cen-
13 ters for Disease Control and Prevention, to develop
14 a coordinated and comprehensive health workforce
15 strengthening strategy for increasing equitable ac-
16 cess to qualified health workers in developing coun-
17 tries, particularly in underserved areas, with a stra-
18 tegic focus on frontline health workers.

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