

113TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 135

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

MARCH 21, 2013

Mrs. LOWEY (for herself and Mr. CRENSHAW) 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 leadership and investment has led to dramatic successes in global health, including the reduction of child mortality by 40 percent in the last 2 decades, the reduction of new HIV infections by 50 percent in 25 low and middle income countries, a decrease in deaths from malaria by 25 percent, and the halving of maternal mortality rates;

Whereas strong health systems in developing countries, including a well-trained, equipped, and supported health workforce, and access to health care are vital for these successes to continue and to ensure that the United

States investment in global health programs is effective and sustainable;

Whereas nations with healthy populations are more likely to be productive, prosperous, and peaceful, while countries with poorer health are more prone to instability, conflict, and extremism;

Whereas the 2010 United States National Security Strategy cites the need to strengthen health systems and invest in global health as key components to countering national security threats;

Whereas frontline health workers are the first and often the only link to health care for millions of people living in the developing world, providing services where they are most needed, especially in remote and rural areas;

Whereas frontline health workers include individuals serving in a range of capacities such as community health workers, midwives, local pharmacists, nurses, and doctors;

Whereas the empowerment of women within the health workforce is critical to save lives;

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, and encourage proper water, sanitation, and hygiene practices;

Whereas the presence of trained and supported frontline health workers is key to the success of United States global health programs, including its efforts to achieve the global goals of ending preventable child deaths and fostering an AIDS-free generation;

Whereas it can cost as little as \$300 to train a frontline health worker in crucial life-saving skills, making investments in frontline health workers one of the most cost effective ways to save lives;

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

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 training frontline health workers helps to develop sustainable local capacity 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;

Whereas the work of frontline health workers is particularly crucial during natural or complex emergency situations to save lives and to aid communities to recover, rebuild, and become self-reliant;

Whereas the impact of investments in frontline health workers has been well documented, such as in Ethiopia where these investments led to a doubling of the rates of children who have been immunized, treated for pneumonia, and been given Vitamin A to prevent blindness, and in Afghanistan, where they have contributed to an almost fivefold increase of skilled midwives, which has led to an over 10-year gain in life expectancy for women;

Whereas despite the key role of frontline health workers in improving health, advancing peace and security, and spurring economic growth, the World Health Organization estimates a shortage of at least 1,000,000 frontline health workers in the developing world;

Whereas despite gains in access to health care, 1,000,000,000 of the world's nearly 7,000,000,000 people have little or no access to basic health services;

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; and

Whereas despite the importance of frontline 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 global 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

1 (3) calls on all relevant Federal agencies, in-
2 cluding the United States Agency for International
3 Development, the Department of State, and the Cen-
4 ters for Disease Control and Prevention, to develop
5 a coordinated and comprehensive health workforce
6 strengthening strategy with concrete targets for in-
7 creasing equitable access to qualified health workers
8 in developing countries, particularly in underserved
9 areas, with a strategic focus on frontline health
10 workers.

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