

Global Frontline Health Workers

Who are frontline community health workers?

They are at the last mile delivering services and connecting health systems to communities. Most of these providers are women from the very communities they serve, which enables them to reach the most vulnerable children and adults with the language skills and cultural knowledge needed to help patients access care and provide basic health treatments and health education.

Health workers provide crucial lifesaving care and treatment and serve as trusted sources of information, aiding in the prevention, detection, and response to global health threats such as malaria, HIV, and TB, as well as emerging and re-emerging outbreaks like COVID-19, cholera, Ebola, and Zika. Frontline health workers also play an essential role in providing maternal health care and ending preventable mother and child deaths.

Global health worker shortages

At least 55 countries lack sufficient doctors, nurses, and midwives to meet the international minimum target, severely compromising service quality and patient safety. The WHO estimates a global shortage of 11 million health workers by 2030, with the most severe shortfall in low-and lower-middle-income countries – particularly in Africa. With only 3% of the world's health workforce, sub-Saharan Africa is home to 24% of patients with infectious or noncommunicable diseases.

Investments to Protect the Future

Strategic and sustained investments in the global health workforce are key to catalyzing the U.S. Government's efforts in global health, offering a potential 10:1 return on economic growth for every dollar invested. Investing in primary health care and frontline health workers could save up to 60 million lives, increase life expectancy by 3.7 years, and promote health equity. A strong health workforce plays a pivotal role in preventing the spread of health threats, stabilizing countries in transition, and managing and curtailing epidemics and pandemics, ultimately safeguarding Americans at home.



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