

# BASICS: BOLD ACTION TO STOP INFECTIONS IN CLINICAL SETTINGS



## AN URGENT AND GROWING CRISIS IN HEALTHCARE

Healthcare facilities are charged with saving lives and improving health. Yet each year, some 46 million people worldwide contract healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) from dirty instruments, health workers' unwashed hands and improperly cleaned surfaces and care environments.

The result is a global calamity: millions of deaths, debilitating illnesses, huge costs to families and national economies, and overburdened health systems. Mothers and newborns are at particular risk. Infection rates among newborns in developing countries are as much as 20 times higher than in high-income countries.<sup>1</sup> HAIs are responsible for up to 56% of all newborn deaths among hospital-born babies in low- and middle-income countries.<sup>2</sup> In addition, overuse of antibiotics in response to high rates of infection is contributing to an alarming rise in antimicrobial resistance.

## Why Now?



- More women are using health facilities for care and childbirth – significant progress that also makes it more critical to deliver high-quality services.
- 17 million women give birth annually in facilities without clean water, sanitation and hygiene and infection prevention services.<sup>3</sup> Providing these basic services will help fulfill healthcare's premise of "do no harm."
- "Keeping healthcare clean" is on the World Health Organization's 2020 list of urgent global health challenges.

This is inherently a gender crisis. Women bear all childbirth-related risks; they also make up 70% of the frontline health workforce and are at risk from poor infection prevention control during their work.<sup>4</sup> In this International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife, 2020 is the optimal moment to invest in BASICS to empower them to improve care and avoid harm for their patients and themselves.



Photo: Save the Children

## THE SOLUTION FOR CHANGE

Four best-in-class organizations have designed BASICS (Bold Action to Stop Infections in Clinical Settings) to support healthcare systems in low- and middle-income countries to institutionalize simple, low-cost, sustainable improvements in infection prevention. These improvements can dramatically cut the number of HAIs and save lives.

BASICS integrates proven but individual approaches into a practical, scalable, revolutionary solution. The partners – Save the Children, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, WaterAid and Kinnos – are global leaders in maternal and newborn health, infection prevention, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and capacity building.

Designed by technical experts and behavior scientists, BASICS catalyzes changes to healthcare so that all staff – from cleaners to midwives, nurses, doctors and managers – can and will make effective infection prevention practices part of their daily routine. BASICS embeds supply chain efficiencies, infrastructure improvement and monitoring and accountability processes within the health system. Coupled with training, mentoring and supervision of health workers, these interventions will deliver improved quality and efficiency of care.



## The Burden of Drug-Resistant Infections

Antimicrobial-resistant infections kill some 700,000 people every year. Around 200,000 are newborn babies whose infections simply do not respond to drugs.<sup>5</sup>

BASICS can also help curb the growing threat of antimicrobial-resistant (AMR) infections by reducing the number of infections contracted and limiting the need for antibiotics – which fuels drug resistance. AMR infections are linked to the deaths of some 700,000 people worldwide every year. The burden falls heavily on low- and middle-income countries, where BASICS' deployment is planned, and where health systems are often unable to manage this burden.

<sup>1</sup> WHO (2016). The Burden of Healthcare-associated Infections Worldwide. World Health Organization

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> WHO & UNICEF (2019). WASH in Health Care Facilities: Global Baseline Report. Joint Monitoring Programme

<sup>4</sup> Johnson & Johnson & Global Scan. Capacity Building of Frontline Health Workers. Sustainable Development Goal Leadership Series.

<sup>5</sup> WHO (2019). No Time to Wait: Securing the future from drug-resistant infections: Report to the Secretary-General of the United Nations

# **"A BASICS MODEL CAN BE INITIATED IN ONE HIGH-BURDEN COUNTRY WITH DONOR INVESTMENTS TO REDUCE HEALTHCARE-ASSOCIATED INFECTIONS IN PROJECT SITES BY AT LEAST 50%."**

## **STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS NEEDED FOR BASICS MODEL**

BASICS is a finalist in the MacArthur Foundation's 100&Change competition and has a multi-country, multi-year implementation plan. It has been rigorously evaluated and highly scored by independent technical experts and peer organizations.

A BASICS model can be initiated in one high-burden country with donor investments to reduce HAIs in project sites by at least 50%. It will be introduced in infection-prone maternity and newborn wards, where nurses and midwives not only deliver treatment but supervise cleaning staff whose actions have a profound impact on infection prevention.

**For \$1 million**, we can implement a model in up to five health facilities to demonstrate impact and cost savings at the facility level and advocate for domestic and donor investments in scaling up.

**A \$5 million investment** will support BASICS demonstration sites to ensure safe, sustainable WASH services and build workforce capacity over four years. Master trainers will cascade training to nurses and midwives and establish a sustainable mentorship program. Through monitoring and evaluation, we will document savings in time, money, resources, antibiotics and patient stay times to leverage additional government investment in scaling the approach and realizing national targets. We will also measure expected quality of care improvements as reported by staff and patients.

**A \$10 million investment** will double the scale of this work, providing a larger platform for generating evidence for national scale. BASICS partners will use the evidence to leverage funds for implementation in more high-burden countries, building BASICS' momentum for global reach.



**Wash.  
Clean.  
Repeat!**



- Research has proven that proper hand hygiene reduces infection risks by 50% and proper disinfection is associated with risk reductions up to 80%.
- Routine cleaning has been associated with a 33% reduction in microbial contamination and 27% infection reduction.

## **Aligning with a Global Movement**



In 2019 all 194 UN member states supported a World Health Assembly resolution to improve water, sanitation and hygiene in healthcare facilities. Each member state also committed to drafting action plans.

For additional information, contact Soha Ellaithy, Senior Director, Strategic Foundation Partnerships, at **475.999.3337** or [sellaithy@savechildren.org](mailto:sellaithy@savechildren.org).

For more information on BASICS  
(Bold Action to Stop Infections in Clinical Settings)  
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