



NEWS RELEASE

Merck Announces Fifth Round of Global Grants to Tackle Maternal Mortality and Promote Health Equity Worldwide

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KENILWORTH, N.J.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Merck (NYSE: MRK), known as MSD outside the United States and Canada, announced today a fifth round of grants in its Merck for Mothers Global Grants program dedicated to reducing maternal mortality in locations where there is the greatest need. Merck for Mothers, the company's global initiative launched in 2011 to help create a world where no woman has to die while giving life, supports the corporate grant program which enables Merck offices around the world to aid nongovernmental organizations that are improving maternal health. The program is designed to be responsive to local women's needs, focusing on how resources can contribute distinctively to increase health equity in maternity care and support.

Since its inception, the Global Grants program has supported over 60 diverse projects in more than 50 global sites, from Argentina to Vietnam, reaching over 3.5 million women and training more than 60,000 health care workers. The first four rounds of Global Grants helped address barriers to seeking and receiving high-quality maternal health care and improving the overall health and wellbeing of women and girls of reproductive age. The fifth round of grantees across Asia Pacific, Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America will lead high-impact activities to improve maternal health and promote health equity ranging from access to quality care using innovative digital tools to education surrounding the health rights of women.

"Merck for Mothers has been part of our legacy of leveraging the private sector for public good for nearly a decade," said Kenneth C. Frazier, chairman and chief executive officer, Merck. "More than 13 million women have benefitted from Merck for Mothers supported programs promoting safe, high-quality care as part of our company-wide commitment to help end preventable maternal deaths."

“This new round of Global Grants projects holds great promise to help reduce disparities in maternal health outcomes and have an impact on women’s health and wellbeing while at the same time, strengthening health systems to make lasting improvements on how maternal health care is delivered today and tomorrow,” said Dr. Mary-Ann Etiebet, lead and executive director of Merck for Mothers.

According to the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, over 800 women die from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth each day. To help reduce maternal mortality, these new grants are unique to their selected region, but all center on collective action to address maternal health and promote health equity:

- In Asia Pacific, our grantees promote safe birth practices, improve access to family planning and engage individuals in their care across ethnic minority regions. These programs seek to increase quality of maternity care in public and private health facilities to support equitable access to critical services.
- In Europe, our grantees provide young women and girls living in medically underserved rural communities with information and access to maternal health care and family planning services.
- In Africa and the Middle East, our grantees support pregnant women living with chronic health conditions with improved access to maternal health and family planning services. These programs also strengthen health providers’ skills and practices, while building strong referral networks to offer comprehensive, respectful care.
- In Latin America, our grantees are expanding the capacity of the health care systems to deliver quality care, including through the use of technology, while also increasing education around the health rights of pregnant women.

“The Global Grants programs in the Asia Pacific region have reached millions of women through maternal health programs that promote safe birth practices, strengthen midwifery education, improve access to family planning, promote health-seeking behaviors and more, said Dorthe Mikkelsen, President, Asia Pacific, MSD. “We are pleased to have new programs in 2021 and the continued opportunities working with stakeholders from government, academia, non-profit and private sectors across the region to take a holistic approach to help address disparities in health care coverage and inequalities that impact quality maternal health.”

New Global Grants Include:

- Argentina: UNICEF is promoting the rights of pregnant women by increasing community participation and intercultural engagement in maternity care with focus on adolescents from indigenous communities in three provinces (Misiones, Chaco and Salta).
- Brazil: The Sociedade Beneficente Israelita Brasileira Albert Einstein is establishing a virtual quality improvement collaborative across hospitals and primary health care units to enhance providers’ knowledge

and skills to improve maternity care.

- Jordan: The King Hussein Cancer Foundation is developing a patient-centric approach to increase uptake of women's health services among pregnant women and new mothers with a focus on family planning, breastfeeding and breast cancer screening.
- Mexico: Grupo de Información en Reproducción Elegida (GIRE) is increasing women's access to information about their rights during and after pregnancy, with focus on respectful care, free from physical and psychological abuse or discrimination.
- Morocco: The Lalla Salma Foundation is providing therapeutic education about maternal health for women living with cancer, while also increasing health care provider awareness of the importance of effective monitoring and support of pregnant oncology patients.
- Philippines: Jhpiego is improving the quality of maternity care in public and private health facilities in the Sorsogon Province (Bicol Region) and establishing an effective referral network to increase timely emergency response to address obstetric emergencies.
- Romania and Moldova: Save the Children, together with Child Rights Information Center in Moldova, is developing and implementing an integrated model of maternal health care and family planning services, supporting pregnant teenagers and young mothers living in rural communities
- Russia: E.V.A. Association is improving sexual, reproductive and maternal health care among women at risk for and living with HIV by raising awareness on prevention and care and increasing health care provider skills to provide comprehensive care.
- West Balkan Region: The International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network is supporting young people's sexual, reproductive and maternal health needs during the COVID-19 pandemic by making sure that information and services are accessible and youth friendly, with special attention to those living in rural settings of the West Balkan Regions (Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Kosovo and North Macedonia).

To learn more about the Merck for Mothers Global Grant program, including current and past grantees, please visit: <https://www.merckformothers.com/where-we-work/global-grants.html>

To learn more about the Merck for Mothers initiative to improve health equity in maternal health care in the U.S., please visit [SaferChildbirthCities.com](https://www.saferchildbirthcities.com).

About Merck

For 130 years, Merck, known as MSD outside of the United States and Canada, has been inventing for life, bringing forward medicines and vaccines for many of the world's most challenging diseases in pursuit of our mission to save and improve lives. We demonstrate our commitment to patients and population health by increasing access to health care through far-reaching policies, programs and partnerships. Today, Merck continues to be at the forefront of research to prevent and treat diseases that threaten people and animals – including cancer, infectious diseases

such as HIV and Ebola, and emerging animal diseases – as we aspire to be the premier research-intensive biopharmaceutical company in the world. For more information, visit www.merck.com and connect with us on **Twitter**, **Facebook**, **Instagram**, **YouTube** and **LinkedIn**.

About Merck for Mothers

Merck for Mothers is our company's \$500 million initiative to help create a world where no woman has to die giving life. Applying Merck's business and scientific resources for nearly a decade, we collaborate with partners to improve the health and well-being of women during pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum period in support of the Sustainable Development Goals. For more information, visit www.merckformothers.com.

Forward-Looking Statement of Merck & Co., Inc., Kenilworth, N.J., USA

This news release of Merck & Co., Inc., Kenilworth, N.J., USA (the "company") includes "forward-looking statements" within the meaning of the safe harbor provisions of the U.S. Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. These statements are based upon the current beliefs and expectations of the company's management and are subject to significant risks and uncertainties. If underlying assumptions prove inaccurate or risks or uncertainties materialize, actual results may differ materially from those set forth in the forward-looking statements.

Risks and uncertainties include but are not limited to, general industry conditions and competition; general economic factors, including interest rate and currency exchange rate fluctuations; the impact of the global outbreak of novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19); the impact of pharmaceutical industry regulation and health care legislation in the United States and internationally; global trends toward health care cost containment; technological advances, new products and patents attained by competitors; challenges inherent in new product development, including obtaining regulatory approval; the company's ability to accurately predict future market conditions; manufacturing difficulties or delays; financial instability of international economies and sovereign risk; dependence on the effectiveness of the company's patents and other protections for innovative products; and the exposure to litigation, including patent litigation, and/or regulatory actions.

The company undertakes no obligation to publicly update any forward-looking statement, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise. Additional factors that could cause results to differ materially from those described in the forward-looking statements can be found in the company's 2020 Annual Report on Form 10-K and the company's other filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) available at the SEC's Internet site (www.sec.gov).

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