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Contact: Bill Poehler
+1 612-825-6831

MCCL GO highlights first 1,000 days of life at World Health Assembly

Maternal, child health at stake during critical period, research shows

GENEVA, Switzerland — The first 1,000 days in the life of a human being—from conception to the second birthday—are crucial to the health and prosperity of both mother and child, according to a new document released this week at the World Health Assembly (WHA) in Geneva, Switzerland. It was produced by Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life Global Outreach (MCCL GO), a U.N.-accredited non-governmental organization.

“A wealth of research has demonstrated how important this 1,000-day window of time is,” stated Scott Fischbach, Executive Director of MCCL GO. “Mothers and babies need quality health care throughout pregnancy, childbirth and the two years after. This must be prioritized in the post-2015 development agenda.”

This week’s 67th annual WHA is a gathering of the U.N.’s World Health Organization, including delegations from all member states. This year’s meeting will include consideration of an action plan to reduce newborn deaths.

An estimated 2.9 million children died within the first month of life in 2012. Many newborn deaths can be prevented by improving the quality of care during labor, childbirth and the days following birth, including essential newborn care, explains MCCL GO’s new document, “1 to 1,000: How to ensure the health and flourishing of women, children, and society.”

The brochure notes that prenatal care and nutrition greatly affect the life of a child. Malnutrition during pregnancy can hinder development of a child’s brain and immune system, inhibiting the child’s ability to learn and making her more susceptible to disease.

“Maternal and child health are intimately connected,” said Fischbach. “Maternal mortality and morbidity remain a serious problem in large parts of the world. We can save the lives of both pregnant women and their babies by providing the care that they need, including skilled birth attendants, emergency obstetric care, sanitation and clean water.”

The brochure also describes the importance of early childhood, when suboptimum breastfeeding leads to an estimated 800,000 deaths each year, and it calls for respect and protection for women during pregnancy and motherhood, when they may be uniquely vulnerable to the threat of violence and abuse.

“The first 1,000 days after conception are so critical in so many ways, not just for women and children, but for society as a whole,” Fischbach explained. “Good care throughout this period leads to healthier, better-educated and more-productive adults, increasing economic prosperity.”

MCCL GO calls on the WHA to prioritize the 1,000-day continuum of care for mothers and babies. “It is absolutely essential to sustainable development,” Fischbach concluded.

MCCL GO’s brochure “1 to 1,000” is available in English, French and Spanish in the Resources section at the MCCL GO website, www.mccl-go.org.

MCCL GO is a pro-life NGO global outreach program of the Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life Education Fund with one goal: to save as many innocent lives as possible from the destruction of abortion. Learn more at www.mccl-go.org. Please subscribe to our [RSS Feed](#).