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MCCL GO highlights ‘Leave no one behind’ at World Health Assembly

Maternal, child health at stake during first 1,000 days of life, 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 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 69th annual WHA is a gathering of the U.N.’s World Health Organization, including delegations from all member states. Among the topics to be discussed are maternal and infant nutrition and the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#). The 2030 Agenda calls for “universal health coverage and access to quality health care” and says that “no one must be left behind.”

MCCL GO’s brochure is called “To leave no one behind: How to ensure the health and flourishing of women, children, and society.” It argues that women and babies must not be left behind as the international community pursues the new sustainable development goals. The brochure will be distributed this week to delegates and health officials at the WHA.

An estimated 303,000 maternal deaths took place in 2015, and 2.7 million children died within the first month of life. These deaths can be prevented by improving the quality of care before, during and after childbirth, explains “To leave no one behind.” It also notes that prenatal care and nutrition greatly affect the life of a child.

“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 undernutrition and suboptimum breastfeeding lead to millions of 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 prosperity.” MCCL GO calls on the WHA to prioritize the 1,000-day continuum of care for mothers and babies.

MCCL GO’s brochure “To leave no one behind” is available in English, French and Spanish in the Resources section at the MCCL GO website, www.mccl-go.org.

MCCL GO is the UN- and OAS-accredited global outreach program of the Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life Education Fund. Our goal is to protect as many human beings as possible from the destruction of abortion, infanticide and euthanasia. Learn more at www.mccl-go.org. Please subscribe to our [RSS Feed](#).