



Preventing Birth Defects Globally: “The Fierce Urgency of Now”

Rationale for CDC 2011 Budget Initiative

Major opportunities exist to improve the lives of children around the world by preventing birth defects and developmental disabilities. Each day prevention is lacking is a day in which thousands of children die or become disabled unnecessarily; prevention is thus urgent. This Administration can lead the charge in creating the global political will to prevent unnecessary suffering and deaths from birth defects and developmental disabilities.

A practical way to implement this prevention would be a major 2011 budget initiative for the National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to provide the leadership and technical assistance required to accelerate the pace of preventing birth defects and developmental disabilities around the globe. Just as CDC provided the leadership and technical assistance that led to global eradication of smallpox and continues to be effective in the global efforts to eradicate polio, with adequate new resources, CDC can provide the leadership and technical assistance to save thousands of children from dying or becoming disabled unnecessarily from birth defects and developmental disabilities.

Currently CDC has a \$200 million annual appropriation to assist in preventing 500 global, annual cases of polio. Spina bifida and fetal alcohol syndrome alone affect more than one million children each year. Surely an increase of \$200 million annually, beginning with the 2011 budget, is not only warranted, but also urgent.

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