



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 18, 2011

Contact: Lynne McDermott

Phone: 0702626240

E-mail: LMcDermott@state.gov

Afghan Community Health Workers Celebrate Their Day

KABUL, AFGHANISTAN | DECEMBER 18, 2011 — In support of United Nations International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development, Afghanistan's Ministry of Public Health celebrated Community Health Worker Day by recognizing the critical role played by community health workers. Celebrating the annual day of recognition were Acting Minister of Public Health Dr. Suraya Dalil, Director of USAID Office of Social Sector Development Carol Horning, and other Afghan Government officials and international donors supporting health development.

More than 22,000 volunteers deliver community-level health education, counseling, and services out of village health posts in private homes throughout the country. On average, 800,000 families in the country seek basic preventative information and care from community health workers every month. Community-based healthcare programs actively encourage communities and families to adopt healthy lifestyles and behaviors, while providing access to high quality and socially acceptable preventative medicine and life-saving services.

"Community health workers, all trained according to the standards set by the Ministry, are qualified to provide proper health education, refer patients to health facilities, encourage vaccinations among children, treat common disease, and provide first aid," said Dalil.

USAID collaborates closely with the Ministry of Public Health to improve the health and nutritional status of Afghans, provide quality primary healthcare, and promote healthy behaviors at the community and household levels. USAID funds the training of more than 9,000 volunteer community health workers in Afghanistan.

"USAID remains committed to partnering with the Ministry of Public Health to support community health in Afghanistan. On behalf of the American people, we commend you for the heroic work you are doing to improve the lives of men, women, and children in your communities," said Horning.

The Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS) is a part of the Afghan government's national strategy to deliver and expand health services to address the most common health problems throughout Afghanistan. Through BPHS, USAID supports operational costs for 530 health facilities including district hospitals, comprehensive health centers, basic health centers, sub-health center clinics, and approximately 5,000 health posts in 13 provinces. USAID is also supporting the development of a new community health worker training manual, training community health worker supervisors and master-trainers, facilitating in-service training, and producing and developing reporting tools, job aids, and educational materials. ###

For more information about USAID's programs, please visit: <http://afghanistan.usaid.gov>

The American people, through the U.S. Agency for International Development, have provided economic and humanitarian assistance worldwide for 50 years.



USAID on Facebook



USAID on Twitter



USAID on YouTube



USAID on Flickr