



PRESS RELEASE

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Midwifery Graduates in Herat Join Effort to Reduce Maternal and Newborn Mortality

HERAT, AFGHANISTAN | JUNE 28, 2012 — Twenty-eight midwives received certificates at today's graduation ceremony in Herat. Herat's Deputy Governor Alhaj Asiluddin Jami, Members of Afghan Parliament Rahima Jami and Mas'udeh Karokhi, U.S. Senior Civilian Representative Brad Hanson, and other Afghan and U.S. Government officials attended the ceremony.

Addressing the gathering in Dari, Brad Hanson commended "the newly-trained midwives' dedication to improve the health of their community", and their "unwavering commitment to enhance the lives of Afghan women and children".

Since 2003, the USAID-supported midwifery course has trained 241 women in Herat. Sixty of them work from their homes, and 181 work at health clinics throughout the province.

"Midwives do an important job that will bring Herat and its districts a sense of safety and prosperity," said Deputy Governor Jami.

For many pregnant women in Herat and throughout Afghanistan, a midwife is the only viable health care provider because of cultural beliefs preventing some women from being treated by male health practitioners. The presence of a skilled provider at birth is a key factor in reducing the risk of negative health consequences and, in many cases, maternal death.

In harmony with Millennium Development Goal 5 to reduce maternal mortality by 75% by 2014, USAID supports the Ministry of Public Health's (MoPH) commitment to reducing high levels of maternal and newborn mortality by increasing the number of trained and skilled midwives, particularly in remote and rural areas of the country.

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