

# VACCINES & IMMUNIZATIONS

## What You Should Know

**Immunization is among the most effective public health interventions.** Vaccines administered from 2000-2019 prevented 50 million deaths in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).<sup>1</sup> Investing in strong health systems, the health workforce, and other professionals closest to the delivery of vaccines and vaccine information helps communities sustain high immunization rates and strengthens health security by stopping infectious diseases at their source. This reduces the risk of disease importation and protects Americans at home and abroad.

**There is a concerning decline in global immunizations for a range of diseases.** In 2021, the world saw the largest sustained decline in childhood

vaccinations in 30 years and 18 million children received no vaccine whatsoever.<sup>2</sup> This backsliding in coverage has resulted in avoidable outbreaks of measles, polio, and other diseases. Equitable COVID-19 vaccine distribution earlier in the pandemic could have saved millions of additional lives.

**U.S. leadership is essential to the development and rollout of vaccines.** The United States has played crucial role in the development and rollout of vaccines—such as for COVID-19, Ebola, and malaria—as well as research on vaccines to protect people against HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, and neglected tropical diseases.

## Congressional Calls to Action

### **Increase global immunization funding to stop backsliding.**

To combat a large decline in childhood immunization, increased resources are needed for Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, UNICEF, and the World Health Organization (WHO)—and bilaterally for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). These investments help prevent outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases while increasing access to primary health services, including reaching zero-dose children who have not received a single vaccine.

### **Increase U.S. investments in vaccine research and development.**

Continued support across a wide range of agencies can transform today's promising research into future lifesaving vaccines, as it has for the new WHO-approved malaria vaccine. The COVID-19 pandemic has also demonstrated the need for more regional vaccine manufacturing capacity, which would also strengthen global health security.

### **Continue expanding U.S. support for mechanisms that strengthen health workforce, systems, and security.**

Immunization access, acceptance, and demand are key indicators of strong, resilient health systems. U.S. support for innovative mechanisms, including the Pandemic Fund at the World Bank and the U.S. Global Health Worker Initiative, which may be key in responding to the next pandemic.

## Why is this investment important?

Immunizations yield great returns. Every dollar invested in child immunization yields up to \$52 in savings for LMICs for health costs, lost wages, and lost economic productivity.<sup>3</sup> Between 2011-2020, \$34 billion invested in LMIC immunization yielded \$1.53 trillion in economic benefits.<sup>4</sup> Prior to COVID-19, child immunization in LMICs averted an estimated 2-3 million child deaths annually. In their first year of distribution, COVID-19 vaccinations saved an estimated 19.8 million lives worldwide.<sup>5</sup>

Immunizations improve health and humanitarian outcomes. U.S. support for child immunization enhances humanitarian outcomes by reducing the spread of infectious diseases in fragile settings.

Disease outbreaks destabilize economies, jeopardize trade and global investment, and are politically disruptive. A healthy country is typically a more stable country.

U.S. investment in global immunization and R&D is critical. The United States engages in global immunization and R&D efforts bilaterally across agencies and multilaterally through support for and investment in Gavi, UNICEF, and WHO. The United States also works alongside dedicated partners in the Measles & Rubella Initiative, the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, and through initiatives like the Immunization Agenda 2030 and the Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Pneumonia and Diarrhea.



U.S. support for child immunization enhances humanitarian outcomes by reducing the spread of infectious diseases in fragile settings. A healthy country is typically a more stable country.

## Resources

CDC Global Immunization Division: <http://bit.ly/2hpG0XO>

UNICEF Immunization Programme: <http://uni.cf/2gOBwuZ>

Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance: <https://www.gavi.org/>

Vaccines (WHO): [https://www.who.int/health-topics/vaccines-and-immunization#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/vaccines-and-immunization#tab=tab_1)

## Contributors

Vince Blaser; Sabin Vaccine Institute

Will Cole; Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance

Brian Massa; United Nations Foundation

## Citations

1. elife Sciences. "Lives saved with vaccination for 10 pathogens across 112 countries in a pre-COVID-19 world." 2021. <https://elifesciences.org/articles/67635>
2. World Health Organization (WHO). "COVID-19 pandemic fuels largest continued backslide in vaccinations in three decades," 2022. <https://www.who.int/news/item/15-07-2022-covid-19-pandemic-fuels-largest-continued-backslide-in-vaccinations-in-three-decades>
3. Sim, So Yoon et al. "Return on Investment from Immunization Against 10 Pathogens In 94 Low- And Middle-Income Countries, 2011–30," Health Affairs, 2020. <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hlthaff.2020.00103>
4. Ozawa, Sachiko et al. "Return on Investment from Childhood Immunization in Low- And Middle-Income Countries, 2011–20," Health Affairs, 2016. <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/pdf/10.1377/hlthaff.2015.1086>
5. Watson, Oliver et al. "Global impact of the first year of COVID-19 vaccination: a mathematical modelling study," The Lancet, 2022. <https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099%2822%2900320-6/fulltext>