



## **Food for the Hungry Calls on Members of Congress to Fund Programs that Support Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition**

**Washington, DC (March 17, 2021)** As Congress begins its annual consideration of appropriations bills that fund U.S. government operations, Food for the Hungry urges members of Congress to advocate for the health of mothers and their children around the world by cosponsoring this [Dear Colleague letter asking for full funding of the U.S. Agency for International Development \(USAID\)'s Maternal and Child Health \(MCH\) and Nutrition accounts](#). This letter provides a valuable opportunity for members of Congress to show their support for programs that improve the health, survival, and wellbeing of mothers and children globally. In 2019, 5.2 million children died from diseases that are preventable and treatable with adequate resources, while nearly 300,000 women continue to die annually from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. The MCH and Nutrition accounts address the health needs of mothers and their children and demonstrate compassionate leadership by the United States. As we are reminded in 1 John 3:18, "Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth."

The letter calls for robust support for the MCH account which funds critical, life-saving activities around the world, and to include funding for vaccine research through Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance to increase access to immunizations globally. It also calls on Congress to bring the Nutrition account to scale – reaching additional young children with essential interventions that increase their survival by focusing on the first 1,000 days of a child's life between pregnancy and their second birthday. Research shows the provision of micronutrients during this critical 1,000-day window is vital to a child's physical and cognitive development, and enables them to reach their full, God-given potential.

MCH programs focus on 25 priority countries, including several where Food for the Hungry operates, such as South Sudan, Ethiopia, Bangladesh and Mozambique. It supports access to

high-quality prenatal, labor and delivery, postpartum, and essential newborn care, as well as immunizations. Funding through the Nutrition account provides technical assistance in priority countries to maximize nutrition activities, including micronutrient supplementation and community management of severe acute malnutrition in children. Nutrition programs also reduce deficiencies in pregnant women by providing nutritional supplements.

In midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the United States has an unique opportunity to demonstrate bold global leadership by tackling the health and nutrition challenges of marginalized women and children. FH applauds the signatories of the letter who support adequate funding for the MCH and Nutrition accounts, and asks that additional members of Congress from both sides of the aisle sign-on to this important letter. We express our gratitude to the United States Government for being the most trusted humanitarian leader around the world – providing more resources for humanitarian crises than any other country. FH will continue to be a voice for vulnerable women and children on Capitol Hill.

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**About Food for the Hungry:**

Food for the Hungry (FH) is a Christian humanitarian organization ending all forms of human poverty by providing life-changing development programs, disaster relief, and advocacy. For 50 years, FH has been going into the world's hardest places with an exit strategy: to respond to human suffering and graduate communities of extreme poverty into self-sustainability, all within a decade. By creating context-specific solutions in education, agriculture, health, livelihood, clean water, and disaster risk reduction, the nonprofit focuses on transformational development, investing in children as the key to lift entire communities out of poverty. With 98% of staff working

in their country of origin, FH works side by side with local leaders, churches, and families to implement innovative solutions. The organization currently serves more than 5.3 million people in over 20 countries worldwide. For more information, follow FH on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#), or visit [www.fh.org](http://www.fh.org).