

Ensure Adolescent Girls Access to Health Services



Objective: Harness Geneva’s multilateral fora and enhance opportunities to ensure adolescent girls have access to the full range of appropriate health services.

“Adolescence is often when a girl is first subject to the cultural values that define what it means to be a woman in her society. Girls across the globe are counting on us to be bold and creative to give them the opportunities they deserve.” – U.S. First Lady Michelle Obama

Key Facts¹

- Around 1 in 6 persons in the world is an adolescent: 1.2 billion people aged 10 to 19.
- An estimated 1.3 million adolescents – boys and girls – died in 2012, mostly from preventable or treatable causes.
- The proportion of girls aged 10-14 that die in pregnancy or childbirth is five times higher than that of women aged 20-24, and twice as high among girls aged 15-19. The vast majority of these deaths take place within marriage, making the fight against early marriage and the promotion of youth sexual and reproductive health critical.
- In 2013, over 80% of new HIV infections in the hardest hit countries were adolescent girls. Every year an astonishing 380,000 girls and young women are infected.
- Violence is a leading cause of death. Globally, some 30% of girls aged 15 to 19 experience violence by a partner.

Where We Are

While data shows that progress has been made on women’s health, positive change has been slow and sporadic when it comes to the availability of appropriate health care for adolescent girls. The lack of specialized adolescent services has serious negative repercussions on adolescent girls becoming healthy productive women and leaders. More needs to be done in areas such as sexual and reproductive health, female genital mutilation (FGM), and prevention of adolescent maternal mortality, sexual violence, chronic diseases, and HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. Adolescent girls may share health problems with their mothers, but their age and role in society means their problems do not necessarily have the same solutions. Adolescent girls will continue to fall between the cracks unless we work together for cross-cutting solutions for **The Future She Deserves**.

What We Need...

is Geneva’s collective action to ensure adolescent girls have access to the full range of appropriate health services, including programs tailored to the developmental challenges of adolescent girls and specific plans for outreach and health communication.

¹ Statistics collected by World Health Organization.

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How We'll Do It

Geneva offers a unique platform to address the health needs of adolescent girls. Together, we can identify targeted interventions and activities at Geneva-based international meetings and programs that highlight adolescent girls' health. Collectively, member states, civil society, and experts can influence how United Nations agencies and others ensure that health initiatives consider the adolescent girl whenever possible. First steps should include:

1. Strengthen synergies between health actors and programs for adolescent girls;
2. Place adolescent girls at the center of international investment on maternal health, expanding adolescent-oriented family planning services and services focusing on the inherent complexities of adolescent pregnancy;
3. Focus attention on HIV prevention on adolescent girls across Geneva platforms, with a particular focus on Sub-Saharan Africa;
4. Advocate for increased access to health services and vaccinations for girls, including appropriate prevention and treatment programs for communicable diseases; and,
5. Expand understanding and support for proven interventions to address the continuing problems of intimate partner, domestic, and sexual violence.

Potential Outcomes and Activities

In partnership with Member States and NGOs, the U.S. Mission will work to build a coalition around the need for health initiatives to be specifically tailored for adolescent girls.

The U.S. Mission will co-host a side event at the World Health Assembly: the Geneva Policy Dialogue Series on Reproductive Health and Resolve Award ceremony, recognizing innovation in reproductive health policy development, service delivery, and financing mechanisms, that shines a spotlight on country-level public sector leadership.

The U.S. Mission will look to co-host a side event at the World Health Assembly on adolescent girls health, which in part will present the work of the public-private DREAMS partnership, which aims to ensure that girls have an opportunity to live Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored and Safe lives.

The U.S. Mission in partnership with "Women@TheTable" will host a salon where participants will explore through interactive catalytic questioning, in advance of the World Health Assembly, new ways forward for more girls, more women, and more strong female voices to better put women's health front and center in the daily global conversation.

****We want your insights to other opportunities and your help in addressing them!**