

# Primary Health Care: The Foundation of Healthy Communities

Primary health care forms the foundation of health systems, ensuring all people stay healthy and get care when they need it. When primary health care works, people and families are connected with trusted health workers and supportive systems throughout their lives, and have access to comprehensive services ranging from family planning and routine immunizations to treatment of illness and management of chronic conditions. Health systems built on strong primary health care are more resilient, efficient and equitable. Primary health care meets the vast majority of communities' diverse health needs, and ultimately, saves lives.

## A HIGH-PERFORMING PRIMARY HEALTH CARE SYSTEM IS:



### PEOPLE'S FIRST CONTACT

Serves as the entry point into the health care system, and the first source of care for most health needs



### PEOPLE-CENTERED

Organized around the health needs and expectations of people rather than diseases



### COMPREHENSIVE

Delivers a broad spectrum of preventative, promotive, curative and palliative care



### CONTINUOUS

Connects people with trusted providers who address their ongoing health needs throughout their lives



### COORDINATED

Manages care across levels of the health system, referring patients to specialists as needed and effectively following up to ensure improvement



### ACCESSIBLE

Offered within people's communities, at a price they can afford

## WHEN PRIMARY HEALTH CARE IS STRONG, THE BENEFITS EXTEND FAR AND WIDE:

- » Growing evidence shows that investing in primary health care leads to **high-quality and cost-effective care** for people and communities.
- » Widespread access to primary health care supports **more equitable distribution of health**.
- » Targeted investments in primary health care **amplify efforts to improve health** across disease and issue areas.
- » The primary health care system serves as an **early warning mechanism** to detect and stop disease outbreaks before they become epidemics.
- » Good primary health care **empowers individuals, families and communities** to be active decision-makers about their health.

### The Primary Health Care Performance Initiative (PHCPI)

is a new partnership that brings together country policymakers, health system managers, practitioners, advocates and other development partners to catalyze improvements in primary health care in low- and middle-income countries through better measurement and knowledge-sharing. PHCPI was founded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the World Bank Group and the World Health Organization, in partnership with Ariadne Labs and Results for Development. We are engaging a network of country policymakers, advocates and other development partners to move the initiative forward.



PRIMARY HEALTH CARE  
PERFORMANCE INITIATIVE

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