

MNT Elimination Initiative

Maternal and neonatal tetanus (MNT) is a disease that strikes down the poorest and most vulnerable, especially singling out women and their newborns living in areas with limited access to health services and poor hygiene. In remote rural areas of developing countries, with limited or no access to treatment facilities, almost all newborns infected with tetanus die.

The MNT Elimination Initiative is an international private-public partnership that includes UNICEF, WHO, the United Nations Population Fund, Gavi, USAID, CDC, Save the Children, PATH, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Kiwanis International, Procter & Gamble, and BD. Its goal is to eliminate maternal and neonatal tetanus, in part through vaccine delivery.

An example of tremendous progress was last year's announcement by the prime minister of India that MNT had been eliminated in India. This landmark achievement will save the lives of countless mothers and their newborns. In 1988, tetanus killed as many as 160,000 young children in India; the elimination of MNT as a public health problem means that the annual rate is less than 1 per 1,000 live births.

The government applied a mix of strategies, with technical support of UNICEF, WHO, USAID, and other stakeholders, including vaccination of pregnant women. These crucial steps have played a key role in eliminating the disease, contributing significantly to progress in the effort to save the lives of children under the age of five, most of whom die from preventable causes.¹

¹ Maternal and Neonatal Tetanus (MNT) elimination. Available at: http://www.who.int/immunization/diseases/MNTE_initiative/en/. Accessed September 28, 2016.