

## News Release

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### **Bayer and White Ribbon Alliance Announce Self-Care Policy Recommendations and Programs to Support Maternal, Newborn and Child Health**

- Joint white paper, released at United Nations High Level Political Forum, outlines key policy changes to address self-care barriers at the global, national and local level
- Bayer commits \$1.3M in programs and services; three-year commitment to help women and children in developing countries

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**Whippany N.J., July 19, 2016** – With 830 women dying every day from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth, and over 16,000 children under age five dying daily, Bayer and the White Ribbon Alliance today released critical policy recommendations and launched community programs to support the reduction and prevention of maternal, newborn and child mortality in two developing countries.<sup>1,2</sup>

Established through a three-year \$1.3 million commitment from Bayer, these programs will expand work conducted by White Ribbon Alliance in Bangladesh and Zimbabwe to support the United Nations Secretary General's *Every Woman Every Child* movement.

This announcement comes at the one-year anniversary of the Bayer/White Ribbon Alliance commitment in support of the *Every Woman Every Child* movement and will contribute to the success of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The programs will help underserved women and their families gain the self-care knowledge, skills and confidence to take charge of their personal and family health before, during and after childbirth – throughout a lifetime. The implementation effort, led by White Ribbon Alliance, will focus on critical health issues and barriers to care, including

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<sup>1</sup> WHO Child Mortality Report. Accessed July 5, 2016 at <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2015/child-mortality-report/en/>

<sup>2</sup> WHO Maternal Mortality Fact Sheet. Accessed July 5, 2016 at <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs348/en/>

nutrition, prevention and minor treatments; hygiene; and self-care policy advancement and advocacy.

“Self-care is the very foundation of health care and, if implemented properly, it can ease the burden on overstretched health systems, reducing costs and increasing effectiveness,” said Kemal Malik, MD, Member of the Board of Management, Bayer AG. “When self-care is prioritized and women have access to health literacy information, it has enormous potential to make a measurable impact on the health of women, newborns and children that can last for generations.”

The partnership is a key step in Bayer’s commitment to advance self-care for all, as outlined in public policy recommendations today released by White Ribbon Alliance and Bayer. The policy paper underscores the potential of self-care to drive forward recommended global policies and interventions.

“Prioritizing self-care supports women to be at the center of health solutions, rather than passive users of the system. This partnership is an important step forward in making that a reality for all mothers, everywhere,” said Betsy McCallon, CEO, White Ribbon Alliance.

“The women and families that will benefit from these programs do not have access to quality health services or emergency care and are in dire need of support,” said Farhana Ahmad, MBBS, National Coordinator, White Ribbon Alliance, Bangladesh. “Multi-stakeholder partnerships like the one between Bayer and White Ribbon Alliance are vital to implementing community-level programs that educate, empower and instill self-care practices for a lifetime.”

Previous self-care efforts have not achieved broad reform, focusing instead on disease-specific or physician-specific initiatives. But self-care must start more broadly and focus on the individual in order to be effective for long-term health impact personally, societally and across generations.

The partnership and its focus on self-care will contribute to the success of the Sustainable Development Goals. Dr. David Nabarro, Special Adviser of the UN Secretary-General on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Climate Change, noted, “Given that universal health coverage is one of our collective goals for the next 15 years, we all need to think very carefully about how to achieve this target with an eye to ensuring the

sustainability of health outcomes. That's why investments in self-care can enable everyone to achieve greater health and perhaps reduce demands on healthcare systems.”

### **Calling for policy action at all levels**

Bayer and White Ribbon Alliance also have outlined the systemic and structural changes necessary in global, national and local health policy systems to address obstacles to self-care in maternal newborn and child health and to integrate self-care into health systems. The partnership stressed the need for a supportive government and community environment that empowers women to trust themselves, know their rights and take actions to improve their health and that of their community.

By continuing to implement cross-sector partnerships, Bayer and White Ribbon Alliance will work with governments and key influencers to recognize and support the benefits of self-care initiatives while helping to meet the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

### **Bayer: Science For A Better Life**

Bayer is a global enterprise with core competencies in the Life Science fields of health care and agriculture. Its products and services are designed to benefit people and improve their quality of life. At the same time, the Group aims to create value through innovation, growth and high earning power. Bayer is committed to the principles of sustainable development and to its social and ethical responsibilities as a corporate citizen. In fiscal 2015, the Group employed around 117,000 people and had sales of EUR 46.3 billion. Capital expenditures amounted to EUR 2.6 billion, R&D expenses to EUR 4.3 billion. These figures include those for the high-tech polymers business, which was floated on the stock market as an independent company named Covestro on October 6, 2015. For more information, go to [www.bayer.com](http://www.bayer.com).

### **About White Ribbon Alliance**

White Ribbon Alliance is a powerful network advocates working for maternal, newborn health and rights at the local, national and global levels. We help citizens recognize and seize their power to demand that all women and their children are safe and healthy before, during and after pregnancy. No woman or girl should die in pregnancy, childbirth

or in the days just after when both mother and baby are at their most vulnerable – yet having a baby is still the biggest killer of young women in many countries. We have made great progress with deaths down by half, but now is the time for the final push. Women have a right to the health care that keeps them safe. We know it can be done; join us to make sure it is. Please add your voice, become a member and support our work:  
[www.whiteribbonalliance.org](http://www.whiteribbonalliance.org) [facebook.com/whiteribbonalliance](https://facebook.com/whiteribbonalliance) @WRAGlobal  
[www.whiteribbonalliance.org/donate](http://www.whiteribbonalliance.org/donate)

### **About *Every Woman Every Child***

*Every Woman Every Child* is an unprecedented global movement that mobilizes and intensifies international and national action by governments, the UN, multilaterals, the private sector and civil society to address the major health challenges facing women, children and adolescents. The movement puts into action the *Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health*, which presents a roadmap on ending all preventable deaths of women, children and adolescents within a generation and ensuring their well-being. Learn more about the movement at: [www.everywomaneverychild.org](http://www.everywomaneverychild.org). Follow the conversation on Twitter: @unfewec #EWECisME

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**Forward-Looking Statements**

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