

January 22, 2024

The Honorable Michael McCaul
Chairman
House Foreign Affairs Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Gregory Meeks
Ranking Member
House Foreign Affairs Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman McCaul, Ranking Member Meeks, and Members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee:

We, the undersigned organizational members of the Frontline Health Workers Coalition and others, are writing to advocate strongly for the support and passage of the Global Frontline Health Worker Resolution ([H.Res. 389](#)). This bipartisan resolution acknowledges the essential contributions of frontline health workers in restoring and accelerating global health gains, saving millions of lives around the world, advancing United States national security, and expanding global economic prosperity.

Frontline health workers, including nurses, midwives, community health workers, doctors, and many more professionals around the world, play a pivotal role as the primary link to essential health services, especially in remote, rural, and conflict-affected areas. Investing in frontline health workers aligns with United States and global interests, offering a potential [10:1 return](#) on economic growth for every dollar invested. A strong health workforce plays a pivotal role in preventing the spread of health threats, stabilizing countries in transition, and managing and curtailing epidemics and pandemics, ultimately safeguarding Americans at home. Of note, a significant portion of the U.S. health workforce, also facing substantial strain, was originally trained in low- and middle-income countries.

Introduced in the House of Representatives by Rep. Ami Bera (D-CA-6) and Rep. Jen Kiggans (R-VA-2), two members of Congress who are also health workers themselves, the bipartisan Global Frontline Health Worker Resolution ([H. Res. 389](#)):

- Reaffirms the central role of local frontline health workforces in achieving the objectives of global health programs;
- Acknowledges that in the aftermath of natural disasters, disease outbreaks, and conflicts, frontline health workers perform critical services under difficult working conditions, often at great personal risk to save lives;
- Urges greater global attention and support for local frontline health workers to ensure their protection and ability to respond effectively during humanitarian and public health crises;

- Recognizes the damaging effects of gender and economic disparities in the health workforce, calling attention to gender inequities as [70% of frontline](#) health workers are women, and are often unpaid or underpaid; and
- Encourages federal agencies to facilitate collaborative learning between domestic and global frontline health workforce strengthening programs to enhance effectiveness and health outcomes.

Health workers provide crucial lifesaving care and treatment and serve as trusted sources of information, aiding in the prevention, detection, and response to global health threats such as pneumonia, diarrhea, malaria, HIV, TB, as well as emerging and re-emerging outbreaks like COVID-19, cholera, Ebola, and Zika. Frontline health workers also play an essential role in providing maternal health care and ending preventable mother and child deaths.

Despite their critical role, health workers are often underpaid or not paid at all. A 2022 *Lancet* commentary highlighted that [up to 85%](#) of community health workers across Africa may not receive direct compensation for their services and a 2023 systematic review found that unsalaried community health workers often face [labor exploitation](#), potentially leading to inadequate health care provision.

The world is grappling with a significant crisis as at least [55 countries](#) lack sufficient doctors, nurses, and midwives to meet the World Health Organization's minimum staff ratios, severely compromising health care service quality and patient safety. Despite improvements in many countries, the WHO estimates a global shortage of [10 million](#) health workers by 2030, with the most severe shortages in low-and lower-middle-income countries. Sub-Saharan Africa, with only 3% of the world's health workforce, is home to [24% of patients](#) with infectious or noncommunicable diseases. Investing in primary health care and frontline health workers has the potential to save millions of lives, increase life expectancy by [3.7 years](#), and promote health equity.

Further, we are deeply concerned about the [targeting of health workers and health facilities](#) in places experiencing conflict like Gaza, Sudan, Syria, and Ukraine, resulting in a record [1,989 attacks](#) on health workers in 2022, over [1,000 attacks](#) on health facilities and health workers in the first 15 months of the war in Ukraine, and nearly [600 attacks](#) on hospitals and other vital medical infrastructure in Gaza and the West Bank since October 7. Lack of access to protected health services, along with shortages of fuel, electricity, water, and sanitation, increases the risk of morbidity and mortality, and the risk of outbreaks.

Frontline health workers serve as the backbone of sustainable and resilient health systems, benefiting families everywhere. Increased US investment in health workers, encompassing support for recruitment, development, training, retention, and safety is not only essential for achieving healthy lives and well-being for all but is also crucial for

global health security. We urge you to cosponsor and support the passage of the Global Frontline Health Worker Resolution today to uplift health workers around the world.

Sincerely,

Accelerate Global
Advancing Synergy
American Society of Tropical Medicine
and Hygiene
Americas TB Coalition
Amref Health Africa
AVAC
CARE USA
Catholic Medical Mission Board
Children's HeartLink
Community Health Impact Coalition
CORE Group
Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS
Foundation
Faiths for Safe Water
Friends of the Global Fight Against AIDS,
Tuberculosis and Malaria
Frontline Health Workers Coalition
Fund for Global Health
GAIA Global Health
Global Health Council
Global Network of Black People working
in HIV
GRIT Strategies
Housing Works, Inc.
Integrate Health
International Association of Providers of
AIDS Care
IntraHealth International

Ipas
JSI
Management Sciences for Health
Medical Impact
mothers2mothers
Operation Smile
Partners In Health
Pathfinder
Project HOPE
Resolve To Save Lives (RTSL)
ReSurge International
RTI International
Save the Children
Smile Train
Stop TB USA
Task Force for Global Health
The Borgen Project
The Fred Hollows Foundation USA
The G4 Alliance
Treatment Action Group
UNICEF USA
United to Beat Malaria
VillageReach
WaterAid
We Are TB
What to Expect Project
Women in Global Health
Women's Refugee Commission
World Vision