**KEY MESSAGING FOR WASH IN HEALTHCARE FACILITIES ADVOCACY**

*"A healthcare facility without WASH is not a healthcare facility."*  
**- Dr. Maria Neira, Director of Public Health and Environment, World Health Organization**  
  
*"If you can't do the basics forget the rest. Prevention, prevention, prevention."*   
**- Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus**, **Director-General**, **World Health Organization**   
  
*"We must work to prevent the spread of disease. Improved water, sanitation and hygiene in health facilities is critical to this effort.”*  
**- UN Secretary-General António Guterres on World Water Day 2018**

**KEY MESSAGE: Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH) is the foundation for global health and absent in the majority of healthcare facilities in the developing world.**

Billions of people must rely on tens of thousands of healthcare facilities that lack the foundation for healthcare: Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH). Without WASH, healthcare facilities are Centers of Infection, not Centers of Healing. Safe water, functioning toilets, and soap must be present in all hospitals and health clinics to provide safe and dignified care; prevent infections in patients and staff; protect women and newborns during childbirth; carry out safe surgery; and prevent and contain antibiotic resistance and pandemics — issues that affect us all. Every infection prevented is one that needs no treatment, causes no suffering, and imposes no economic burden.

**POINT 1: Mothers and newborns are most vulnerable.**

In some places, newborns are not named because death is so commonplace. 17 million women give birth in healthcare facilities without WASH every year. Unwashed hands, contaminated beds, unsafe water and dirty instruments used to cut umbilical cords transmit easily preventable, and sometimes deadly, infections. Day One is when more than 40% of maternal and newborn deaths occur, though the majority of these deaths are preventable.

**POINT 2: Women Want Water.**

1.2 million women and girls from 114 countries were asked about their priorities to improve the quality of reproductive and maternal health services. The White Ribbon Alliance [‘What Women Want’](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5aa813dd3917ee6dd2a0e09e/t/5d1120ccdf7cbc0001b99c57/1561403606693/What-Women-Want_Global-Findings.pdf) survey found WASH in healthcare facilities was the second ranking demand after dignity. WASH also impacts healthcare workers, and because most nurses, midwives, facility cleaners, and those utilizing health services are women, the lack WASH disproportionately affects women.

**POINT 3: Global health threats know no borders.**

WASH in healthcare facilities is foundational to preventing and containing antimicrobial resistance, epidemics and pandemics; and required for global stability and economic growth.

**POINT 4: Key to solvability is sustainability.**

One of the most serious issues facing global health is solvable. Improving WASH hinges not on scientific or technological breakthroughs, but on integrated WASH and health systems strengthening where institutions and resources work across sectors, globally to locally. Solutions must come with long-term commitment to training, maintenance and funding, or broken pumps, pipes and sinks will result and rollback progress.

***SHARE YOUR STORY:***

Stories make powerful advocacy: A woman in labor must haul her own water of questionable quality, to give birth in a healthcare facility that cannot be adequately cleaned. The sickly newborn whose umbilical cord is cut with a dirty instrument on a table wiped down with dirty rags. The surgeon asked to perform without adequate WASH. Nurses and midwives on the frontlines of curing illness and stopping diseases get sick. These situations should be unimaginable, but they are real and paint a picture that help others envision what healthcare facilities around the world look like — the broken wells, pumps, pipes, toilets, and sinks that have fallen into disrepair; or the absence of WASH infrastructure all together that put babies, new mothers and healthcare workers at daily risk.

**Learn more and share best practices, partnerships, news and events, and the growing list of actionable commitments being made to solve this solvable global issue:** [**www.washinhcf.org**](http://www.washinhcf.org).