

Child Health is Society's Health: Essential Steps

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Child health is crucial for optimal societal health and well-being and is the foundation to adult health. Child health is defined as the state of physical, mental, intellectual, social, and emotional well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity [1]. This health status may be impacted by the families, environments, and the communities in which children live and depend on to reach their optimum potential. Maternal health and well-being are the keys to unlock for every child the highest developmental potential. The maternal health status, habits, and environment before and during pregnancy are essential and foundational for healthy child development [2].

According to the World Health Organization 2013, anyone who is within the age group of nineteen years and younger is classified as a child. Children ages ten to nineteen years are classified as adolescents and the classification for an infant is a child who is less than one year old [3]. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) have proposed the following health goals for children:

- “Universal, quality, and affordable health insurance for all who live in the United States, regardless of income, family composition, or immigration status, from birth through twenty-six years of age.
- Coverage of essential pediatric benefits. These include but are not limited to prenatal and newborn care, postnatal home visits; preventive and wellness services; urgent and emergency care and services for dental treatments, behavioral and mental care, reproductive health, and treatment of substance abuse disorders.
- Cost-sharing expenses (copayments, deductibles, and coinsurance charges) that are structured to enable preventive care, encourage wise use of other medical care, and are affordable in relation to family income.
- Adequate provider payments to strengthen the medical home and help physicians coordinate services and care” (AAP, 2016).

Nationally and internationally there are steps on improving health. The progress towards health improvement includes; the practice of good hygienic conditions, adequate balanced nutrition, and avoiding environmental hazards. In addition, education is a crucial determinant in reducing the incidence of morbidity and mortality, as well as promoting and improving child health. It is imperative that families are educated and empowered to make the best choices in utilizing the resources of public health services. It is postulated that mothers who are educated make critical health decisions for their households. However, there is still a tremendous need for more research on the development of health education strategies for all students and mothers [4].

The Center of Disease Control (CDC), has aligned with the United States Global Health Goal (USG), and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Global Health Strategy, to improve the health and well-being of nations universally. The primary objectives of this coalition are to reduce maternal and perinatal mortality and child morbidity and mortality. The CDC now holds offices in more than fifty countries that support, plan, implement, and evaluate public health programs in their countries [5].

There is a stupendous amount of work to be accomplished in communities, nations, and the world to improve child health. The collaborative effort of the health department leaders, healthcare providers, politicians, families, communities, and stake holders to implement a variety of approaches that are diversified to reach across cultures, economic barriers, and to empower individuals and families as an integral part of a team. The goal of the team is geared at reducing congenital abnormalities, chronic illnesses, the transmission of infectious diseases among children and ongoing surveillance. The new United States Goal is the eradication of preventable child death and the reduction the incidence of deaths among children under five years old to 20/1000 live births by 2035 [5]. The future of a healthy nation significantly relies on the health of children and young people. It is therefore imperative that maternal health is optimized, family education strategized, and access to healthcare be prioritized.

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