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MCSP Zika Response Team

Work Plan Activities for Program Years 2–3

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Global Technical Leadership

The Maternal and Child Survival Program (MCSP) continues to provide leadership in regional and global fora on technical issues related to the Zika response, particularly the care and support of Zika-affected children and their families. MCSP collaborates with a range of partners to improve strategies for preventing and responding to the Zika virus. These efforts include providing key technical resources and information, sharing the latest evidence, disseminating materials, linking with regional and national professional associations, and promoting mPowering's new online portal.

Maternal and Child Survival Program's Zika Response Activities



Early Childhood Development

Improving the quality and coverage of facility- and community-based early childhood development services has emerged as a priority focus area in the ongoing, local responses to the Zika virus in Barbados, Grenada, Guyana, St Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago. Given the overwhelming evidence on the importance of early intervention in infants infected with the Zika virus, MCSP has developed materials focusing on therapeutic early stimulation to build the capacity of health care workers to perform this skill in five MCSP-supported countries in the Eastern and Southern Caribbean (ESC) region and beyond. MCSP is also using existing technical standardization materials focused on early stimulation to build the capacity of providers and caregivers to recognize the typical trajectory of development and empower parents to support their children's development at home. By developing materials and a framework for providing psychosocial support to parents and caregivers, MCSP is contributing to the well-being of families and caregivers of Zika-affected children (and children with disabilities in general).

Strengthening Postnatal Care and Data Use for Decision-Making

Recognizing the important role of quality, postnatal care (PNC) services in the care of pregnant women and infants living in areas impacted by the Zika virus epidemic, MCSP responded to requests from the Ministries of Health in Barbados, Guyana, and St Lucia to design and implement activities focusing on quality improvement (QI) and data use, specifically to improve the quality of PNC service delivery. MCSP has assisted facility-based teams to develop and implement facility-specific QI plans that focus on a range of areas related to the care of mothers and infants. These plans include improving temperature management of newborns, rates of exclusive breastfeeding, and coverage of postpartum family planning counseling. These efforts are country-led and carried out in collaboration with representatives of the Caribbean Regional Midwives Association (CRMA), who provide on-the-ground support for QI processes at MCSP-supported facilities. Local, clinical mentors from the CRMA conduct monthly visits with facility-based teams to provide technical support on identifying methods of and sources for data collection, visualizing data using a wall

chart, and completing an easy-to-use indicator tracker to monitor improvements in service delivery over the course of the project and beyond.

Essential Care for Small Babies

MCSP is rolling out the Essential Care for Small Babies (ECSB), a curriculum designed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, to providers who care for small babies in all five MCSP-supported countries in the ESC region. This curriculum offers skills and tools to providers for improving their care of small babies in facilities and at home, particularly around temperature management and feeding. MCSP held a regional training of trainers in Trinidad to train health care providers across 10 countries in the ESC region. These trainers, in turn, began national ECSB training sessions in their respective countries in 2018, reaching providers from both urban and extremely rural areas in the region.

Research on Neurodevelopmental Effects of Congenital Zika Infection on Infants

MCSP is supporting a critical research study that is led by the Windward Islands Research and Education Foundation (WINDREF) at St. George's University in Grenada. In Grenada, the first babies who were exposed to the Zika virus in utero reached 2 years of age in early summer 2018. Following these children as they develop has allowed researchers to identify specific domains of functional impairment and recommend specific therapeutic interventions and community-based support for the children and their parents. Early intervention is more likely to have a positive impact on long-term functional outcomes when interventions are targeted to address specific needs, as identified through state-of-the-art tools for assessing neurodevelopment. WINDREF works closely with Grencase, a local organization providing home-based care, and the Grenada Ministries of Health, Education, and Social Development to track this cohort of infants (and their mothers) who participated in an initial study of pregnant women during the local Zika virus outbreak.

Adapt, Develop, and Disseminate Tools and Resources

MCSP has adapted and developed materials for providers and health facility managers, including materials related to gestational age assessment and PNC of mothers and newborns. In coordination with other partners, materials for providers will be disseminated through existing relationships with regional professional associations—such as the Latin American and Caribbean Neonatal Alliance, CRMA—and in-country professional associations and networks. Dissemination activities will include collaborations with United States Agency for International Development's ASSIST program via the maternoinfantil.org website, Knowledge for Health's (K4H's) Zika Communication Network, and the mPowering ORB platform.

ZIKV Portal on ORB

mPowering's ORB content platform (www.health-orb.org) will continue to host high-quality, Zika virus-related training content for frontline health workers and their communities; it will offer links to other platforms, including those for K4H, ASSIST, UNICEF, and Pan American Health Organization, where Zika-related training content is also housed. To avoid duplication of efforts and assure the quality and relevance of Zika-related content posted to ORB, mPowering works with other partners to grow the Zika content library with materials that meet mPowering's content and quality assurance criteria.

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