

Christian Connections for International Health

promoting international health and wholeness from a Christian perspective



CCIH Advocacy Priorities

Background

In recent years, the CCIH Board of Directors has affirmed a role for CCIH in advocacy, so that now CCIH describes its three main functions as:

1. Information sharing (annual CCIH conference, email bulletin, listservs, participation in other conferences, etc.)
2. Networking (including facilitating collaboration and partnership building), and
3. Advocacy in areas of common interest among CCIH members

Promotion of Faith-Based Organizations in Global Development

From CCIH's beginnings in 1987, the network has become an increasingly prominent voice advocating for the importance of faith-based organizations (FBO) in international health, promoting dialogue and collaboration with FBOs among governments, international development institutions, and professional organizations. This interaction has expanded from its inception with the predecessor of the Global Health Council to include U.N. organizations (WHO, UNAIDS, UNFPA), World Bank, Global Fund, the U.S. Government (USAID, State Department, HHS), and many professional associations and organizations involved in international health and development.

Child Survival

Since many CCIH members are involved in child survival, health, and development, CCIH has participated for many years in advocacy efforts for improved policies and strengthened U.S. Government funding and support in this area. A key manifestation of this advocacy has been the active participation of the CCIH Executive Director in the steering committee of the U.S. Coalition for Child Survival since 2002. This work has included a concerted effort to incorporate and expand the participation and influence of FBOs in the Coalition.

HIV/AIDS

CCIH has participated prominently in advocating approaches to HIV prevention that build on Christian traditions and values and are also shown to be effective by evidence-based indicators. This work has included presentations at several conferences, two AIDS-related email listservs, and culminated in the 2008 publication and distribution of 7,000 hard copies (plus online distribution) of *The ABC Approach to Preventing the Sexual Transmission of HIV: Common Questions & Answers*. CCIH also participated proactively in advocacy with Congress for the reauthorization of PEPFAR in 2008, encouraging its members and other FBOs to make their voices heard.

Family Planning

A newer area of advocacy for CCIH is family planning and reproductive health, encouraged by the 2008 CCIH member survey, summarized in the report entitled *International Family Planning: Christian Actions and Attitudes*. The survey found that CCIH members supported family planning as an important family health measure, when it was clear that it did not include abortion and when it was approached with respect for the religious policies and sensitivities of various communities. This report also documented that many overseas CCIH members wished to expand and strengthen family planning as an integral component of their overall health services. Based on these findings, the CCIH Board of Directors approved an active CCIH advocacy effort led by its Family Planning/Reproductive Health working group. Following on the achievements of a U.N. Foundation grant in 2010, CCIH has received a second UNF grant to facilitate its advocacy in family planning and to engage its members. The objectives of the second UNF grant include specific advocacy activities and these have stimulated discussions regarding CCIH's approach to specific advocacy efforts.

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