



In **Malawi**, we're partnering with the Ministry of Health to transform the community health system. We're addressing urgent maternal and child health needs through a workforce equipped with digital tools, strong training, and effective support systems.

The need: Essential primary care is out of reach for one in five Malawians. Across the country, 84% of people reside in rural areas, of whom almost one quarter live more than eight kilometers from a clinic or hospital. Malawi holds some of the highest maternal and child mortality rates in Africa: an area of critical need and a government-identified priority.

Our focus: Last Mile Health is working alongside the Ministry to improve primary care access and maternal and child health outcomes by equipping the community health workforce with essential support to deliver quality care. This includes scaling a new digital health information system, strengthening training, and supporting emergency transport for pregnant women and newborns.

Program background

Malawi launched its current national community health worker program in 2017 in response to pressing gaps in primary care. As the program matures, the Ministry of Health's priorities are to:

- Expand the program's scope and hire more health workers,
- Improve community-level data systems to aid decision-making and enhance outbreak preparedness, and
- Strengthen training for community health workers to improve quality of care.

Our work with the Ministry began in 2019, when we jointly designed a new digital community health information system. By equipping community health workers to capture information digitally, the system supports sound clinical decision-making and streamlines data-sharing. This means patients get better care, while health leaders can better understand health trends, outbreaks, and threats from new and emerging diseases.

By the numbers

Our direct footprint: Last Mile Health has worked in Malawi since 2019. To date, we've directly supported **4,183** community and frontline health workers serving a population of nearly **6.8 million** people.

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National program reach: Malawi has a population of about **20.4 million** people. Since 2017, the government has deployed approximately **15,500** community health workers nationally, an investment that has significantly increased primary healthcare access.

Background (continued)

Since 2019, we've helped the Ministry implement and scale the system while developing and implementing standardized training in maternal and child health. Together, effective training and improved systems equip community health workers to deliver quality care with an emphasis on improved outcomes for mothers and children.



Community midwife assistant Agness Alfonso holds the tablet she uses to access the integrated Community Health Information System.

At a moment of pivotal growth, partners can help realize innovative systems and proven solutions that **transform maternal and child health outcomes** across Malawi.

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Our current work in Malawi

Equipping health workers with digital systems to improve maternal and child health services

Delivering primary care with a focus on maternal and child health, Malawi's community health workers serve large populations. In remote settings, supervisors aren't available for real-time support, and paper-based reporting makes information-sharing difficult. To address these challenges, Last Mile Health supports the Ministry of Health to scale and strengthen the integrated Community Health Information System (iCHIS), the government's digital system for data collection and decision support. Already, 19% of community health workers are using the system, reaching **4.3 million people**.

iCHIS supports:

- **Better service delivery**, supporting community health workers to make informed clinical decisions at the point of care
- **Real-time performance monitoring** and feedback
- **Efficient patient tracking**
- **Data-driven policy and practice**
- **A stronger community health system** that integrates training, supervision, and data collection
- **Higher-quality maternal and child health services** through more timely and responsive care

Connecting pregnant women to emergency transport

In rural Malawi, pregnancy and delivery complications can turn fatal when care is out of reach. We support the Ministry of Health and Vodafone Foundation to implement and scale **m-mama, a government-led emergency transport system for pregnant women and newborns**. m-mama targets three delays in maternal and newborn care: delay in seeking care, delay in reaching the health facility, and delay in receiving adequate care at the facility. It strengthens existing transport systems and deploys volunteer drivers when ambulances are unavailable, facilitating accessible care and leveraging technology, government leadership, and community engagement. Last Mile Health provides technical support and leads implementation and roll-out, simultaneously building community health workers' capacity to use the system. This dual approach strengthens the referral network, with community health workers serving as a critical link to communities.

Building a sustainable future through health financing

To drive a sustainable national community health program, Last Mile Health partners with the Ministry of Health to **streamline and mobilize funding for community health**. We work alongside the Government of Malawi to advocate for increased resources by identifying funding gaps in priority areas. For example, we supported the Ministry to develop the National Community Health Financing Advocacy tool, instrumental in mobilizing new resources, and have developed additional tools to build on this foundation. We have also supported comprehensive mapping of community health resources to **improve cost-efficiency and address gaps**. Last Mile Health is a member of Malawi's Universal Health Coalition and is represented on national technical working groups and task forces on community health.