



In Malawi, we're partnering with the Ministry of Health to transform the community health system. Our focus is on equipping community health workers with powerful digital tools and strong, standardized training.

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. As a result, HIV/AIDS, malaria, and respiratory illness are among the leading causes of death. Malawi holds some of the highest maternal and child mortality rates in Africa.

Our focus: We're working alongside the Ministry of Health to build a new digital health information system, improve training and supervision for community health workers, and strengthen community health financing through planning and advocacy. Our focus is on improving quality of care to save lives at the last mile.

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 current 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 partnership with the Malawi Ministry of Health began in 2019. Our first joint endeavor was to design the country's new digital community health information system. The system enables community health workers to use mobile tablets to capture patient information, make informed clinical decisions at the point of care, and share data with public health authorities.

By the numbers

Our direct footprint: Last Mile Health has worked in Malawi since 2019. To date, we've directly supported **3,186** community and frontline health workers serving a population of more than **4.7 million** people.

3,186

community health
workers directly
supported to date

National program reach: Malawi has a population of about **20.4 million** people. Since 2017, the government has deployed approximately **12,000** community health workers nationwide. Over the next several years, the Ministry of Health plans to nearly double the size of the community health workforce.

Background (continued)

Key features of the system include the ability to track resource availability, manage clinical cases, and report key events, such as signs of a disease outbreak. Since 2019, we've supported the Ministry of Health to implement the system at the district level and scale it nationally. We've also trained health leaders to leverage this new data to improve quality of care.



Community health worker Ireen Laimosi played a key role responding to the public health impacts of a recent tropical cyclone in her community.

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I feel so great knowing that I work in a community just as the one I grew up in... I show them they have the power to change.

- Ireen Laimosi
Community health worker

Current activities

Data systems: Our core body of work in Malawi is supporting the government to build and sustain an integrated Community Health Information System (iCHIS). As the government seeks to build health sector resilience, this system will be valuable for much more than just monitoring program performance. Like many countries, Malawi currently faces the threat of emerging infectious diseases. As climate change causes an increase in extreme weather events and flooding across the region, the country has also seen devastating outbreaks of known diseases like cholera. By operationalizing a robust community-based information system, we aim to equip Malawi's community health workers to serve as an early warning system and first line of defense against these threats.

Training and supervision: We're also working with the Ministry of Health to provide training for community health workers and supervisors. To date, much of our training work has focused on orienting health workers to the new community-based information system. We also support the Ministry of Health to conduct trainings aimed at improving the quality of patient care. For example, in response to a critical area of need, we have supported in-service trainings for community health workers on maternal and newborn care.

Financing: To sustain the program over the long term and ensure consistent quality, the government of Malawi will need robust, sustainable financing. To address this need, we support the government to map resources, develop financing plans, and advocate for both domestic and multilateral investment in the community health workforce.

Evidence

Since 2022, 2,519 community health workers have been trained on iCHIS. Ultimately, iCHIS will cover all 17 training and reporting modules and will be scaled to the full community health workforce.

11 iCHIS
modules
developed

262 health workers trained in
community-based
maternal & newborn care

Opportunity

Together with government partners, we're building the foundational systems needed to ensure that Malawi's community health program can deliver lifesaving results for generations to come. We welcome new funders to partner with us in realizing a healthier future for all Malawians.

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