



Dear Friends of the Network for Improving Quality of Care for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health,

Over the past year, the countries participating in the Network for Improving Quality Care for Maternal Newborn and Child Health have continued to grapple with the impact of COVID-19. All the while, countries have continued to adapt, learn and demonstrate that quality improvement is possible and moreover, is an essential process in the face of a prolonged health system shock.

Network countries have been successful in keeping Quality of Care (QoC) at the top of countries' national health agendas. This has been possible due to commitment from country leadership and the ability of both to stay flexible and respond to country needs. During 2021, Sierra Leone, Ghana and Ethiopia hosted National Learning Forums to share lessons and experiences, document progress and discuss future steps to ensure quality maternal, newborn and child health. These proceedings have been documented and shared in the Network's National Forums [webinar series](#) conducted by the respective Ministries of Health hosted by the Network Secretariat. National Forum documentation is also available on [Country Pages](#) on the Network website. Moving into 2022, additional Network countries have plans in place to conduct a national learning forum.

In May 2021, the Network launched a report on progress ['Evolution, Implementation and Progress 2017-2020 report \(2021\)'](#) documenting the status of progress and lessons emerging from Network country efforts. The report is accompanied by a [Summary Brief](#), and three Knowledge Briefs on the Networks strategic objectives: [Leadership](#), [Action](#), [Learning and Accountability](#).

The engagement of the private sector in QoC MNCH was a prominent feature of work in 2021. The issue of private sector engagement to deliver quality MNCH services was raised by the QoC Network countries during the last Network meeting in Ethiopia in March 2019. The QoC Network countries requested the WHO to explore ways of working with private sector actors and assist countries to address this gap. Bangladesh, Ghana and Nigeria

have since engaged in [an exploratory project](#) on private sector engagement and shared their experience in the [webinar series](#) titled Private Sector Engagement in Quality Care for MNCH. The Secretariat published [a policy dialogue guidance](#) to assist countries in planning, organizing, and facilitating multi-stakeholder policy dialogues on private sector delivery of quality maternal and newborn health services. A [mixed-methods systematic review](#) and [scoping review protocol](#) on private sector delivery of quality care for maternal and newborn healthcare has been published in the British Medical Journal (November 2021). Upcoming, in February 2022, a two-day meeting will be hosted to build awareness among countries on how to include and optimize engagement of the private sector to improve the quality of maternal and newborn health care using a WHO-PSE governance strategy. This will also include the updated methods and tools applied by the three QoC Network countries (Ghana, Nigeria and Bangladesh), so that other countries can gain understanding and learn from their experiences.

Advancing the essential role of Maternal Perinatal Death Surveillance and Response (MPDSR) in quality improvement is supported by new [WHO country guidance](#). A recent Knowledge Brief was published by the Secretariat [Implementation of maternal and perinatal death surveillance and response as part of quality of care efforts for maternal and newborn health: Considerations for synergy and alignment](#). This brief sets out MPDSR as a key intervention to support the delivery of quality care to strengthen national healthcare systems. Based on the implementation experience of the Network, the Knowledge Brief [Five functions to improve quality of care for maternal newborn and child health](#) was published in 2021 to support policy-makers, managers, practitioners and implementing partners engaged in improving quality of care (QoC) for maternal, newborn and child health. The experiences of countries is also being shared in a Network [webinar series](#) titled Maternal Perinatal Death Surveillance and Response designed to share lessons in strengthening MPDSR at country level.

Key agendas expanding in 2022 include advancing the quality of pediatric care and small and sick newborn care. An inter-country meeting of Network countries and a broader group of 20 African countries was hosted in 2021 to share learning toward transforming care for small and sick newborn care. Country learning and new or updated guidance and tools are being shared in the webinar series [Transforming care for small and sick newborns](#). Also in 2021, the Network launched a webinar new series on [Integrating Stakeholder and Community Engagement in QoC initiatives for MNCH](#). Bangladesh shared their experience in advancing community engagement at sub-district level and more country experiences will be shared in 2022.

Further in 2022, the Network secretariat propose to conduct a review and consultation with Network countries and partners to collect feedback and suggestions on how work can move forward in the future. As it is now five years since the launch of the Network, it is timely to review how the Network concept was implemented, the successes and challenges and reassess how this work should be moved forward beyond the Network countries and also streamline with country and global emerging agendas.

We look forward to continued collaboration and partnership in 2022, and wish you and your loved ones a joyful and safe end to 2021.

Season's Greetings from The Quality of Care Network Secretariat.

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