



EVENT ADVISORY FOR JULY 20, 2010 AT 12:00 P.M. EASTERN

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Women's Policy, Inc. and Congressional Women's Caucus Members to Hold Capitol Hill Briefing on Reducing Maternal Deaths in Afghanistan, Tuesday, July 20 at Noon

State Department's Melanne Verveer and Afghan health experts address the issues behind one of the world's highest maternal mortality rates

Washington, DC -- A bipartisan group of Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues (CCWI) members and Women's Policy, Inc. will join Obama Administration officials and Afghan health experts to discuss maternal health in Afghanistan and strategies for reducing deaths among Afghan women during pregnancy and childbirth.

Headlining the briefing is the U.S. State Department's **Melanne Verveer**, Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues. In testimony before the Subcommittee on International Operations and Organizations, Human Rights, Democracy and Global Women's Issues of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in February, Verveer said the U.S. is "working to rebuild Afghanistan's healthcare services, and particularly to change its maternal mortality rate." Afghanistan has the second highest maternal mortality rate in the world: one out of eight women in that country who become pregnant die from causes related to pregnancy and childbirth each year (<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5380.htm>).

Also addressing the briefing are three Afghanistan and maternal health experts: **Mary Ellen Stanton**, Senior Maternal Health Advisor to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Bureau for Global Health, where she guides the Bureau's maternal health portfolio, including research and implementation of country programs; **Dr. Koki Agarwal**, Maternal Health Director at Jhpiego, the Johns Hopkins University affiliated international health nonprofit, and Director of USAID's Maternal and Child Health Integrated Program; **Dr. Nasratullah Ansari**, Technical Director of the ACCESS Health Services Support Project led by Jhpiego in Afghanistan in cooperation with USAID. All three have worked on the front lines of health care and health policy in Afghanistan. They will report on the importance of Afghan women's access to health services and skilled providers (including midwives) in reducing mortality from pregnancy and childbirth.

The lunch briefing is sponsored in cooperation with the following members of the Women's Caucus: Rep. **Carolyn Maloney** (D-NY); Rep. **Judy Biggert** (R-IL); Rep. **Lois Capps** (D-CA); Rep. **Kay Granger** (R-TX); Rep. **Jan Schakowsky** (D-IL); Rep. **Gwen Moore** (D-WI); Rep. **Susan Davis** (D-CA); Rep. **Cathy McMorris Rodgers** (R-WA).

Sponsored by Women's Policy, Inc., the briefing is made possible through a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Members of the news media wishing to attend should RSVP to Anne Singer, contact above; lunch will be provided.

WHAT: Lunch Briefing: Maternal Health in Afghanistan: How Can We Save Women's Lives?

WHEN: Tuesday, July 20, 2010, 12 Noon to 2 P.M. Eastern

WHERE: 345 Cannon House Office Building (Cannon Caucus Room)

WHO:

The Honorable Melanne Verveer, Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues, Department of State
Mary Ellen Stanton, Senior Maternal Health Advisor to the USAID Bureau for Global Health

Koki Agarwal, MD, MPH, DrPH, Maternal Health Director, Jhpiego; Director, USAID's Maternal and Child Health Integrated Program (MCHIP)

Nasratullah Ansari, MD, Technical Director, Jhpiego, ACCESS Health Services Support Project in Afghanistan

Reps. Carolyn Maloney and Judy Biggert

Co-Chairs, International Women's Issues Task Force, Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues

Reps. Lois Capps and Kay Granger

Co-Chairs, Women's Health Task Force, Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues

Rep. Jan Schakowsky

Co-Chair, Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues

Reps. Gwen Moore and Kay Granger

Vice-Chairs, Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues

Reps. Susan Davis and Cathy McMorris Rodgers

Women's Policy, Inc. is a non-profit, non-partisan public policy organization that champions the interests of women throughout the country on the most significant social, economic, and health issues across the public policy spectrum. The organization's sole focus is to help ensure that the most informed decisions on key women's issues are made by policymakers. More information is online at www.womenspolicy.org.