

ADEN, June 13, 2023 – Today, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the World Health Organization (WHO) have jointly announced a new one-year, USD1.89 million program to more sustainably integrate COVID-19 vaccines and medical oxygen supplies into primary health care (PHC) services of Yemen.

The USAID-funded program will support the operations and running costs of eight oxygen plants, with a focus on delivering COVID-19 care to critically ill patients in the intensive care units (ICUs) of at least five referral hospitals. It will also enable WHO to train ICU personnel to better deliver life-saving care, and to strengthen local capacities to increase COVID19 vaccine uptake in vulnerable communities.

“We are transitioning our COVID-19 assistance from the earlier emergency response activities to a longer-term approach which integrates COVID-19 care into the overall health system,” said USAID Country Director for Yemen Kimberlee Bell. “In coordination with our Yemeni health partners, USAID has provided assistance in the past to improve local health systems. Today we are thrilled to announce these two new contributions which will improve lifesaving health services for the Yemeni people.”

“Thanks to our continuing partnership with USAID, WHO will be able to scale up access to quality care by severely ill patients suffering from COVID-19 and other diseases in five referral hospitals across four governorates – Aden, Hadramout, and Marib and Taiz,” said Dr Arturo Pesigan, WHO Representative to Yemen. “Our partnership with USAID is also critical for transitioning WHO’s support to Yemen’s health systems from emergency relief to more sustainable programming.”

USAID funding to WHO during 2021 and 2022 supported the provision of medical oxygen for more than 1 million patients at 25 hospitals and other medical facilities. USAID, through WHO, also helped deploy vaccination teams who provided COVID-19 vaccination and outreach to remote communities.

Nine years of intensive conflict has left over two-thirds of Yemen’s population (21.6 million people) in present need of humanitarian assistance. Yemen’s deteriorating economy, high food insecurity and recurring disease outbreaks have all but collapsed the country’s health system. Currently, 46 percent of Yemen’s health facilities are non-functioning or partially functioning due

to shortages of staff, funds, electricity, medicines, supplies, and equipment.

About WHO: Since 1948, The World Health Organization (WHO) has been the United Nations agency dedicated to advancing health for all, so that everyone, everywhere can attain the highest level of health. WHO leads global efforts to expand universal health coverage, direct and coordinate the world's responses to health emergencies and connect nations, partners and people to promote health, keep the world safe and serve the vulnerable.

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