Myanmar
PATH is a global organization that solves the world’s most pressing health challenges by bringing together public institutions, businesses, social enterprises, and investors. With expertise in science, health, economics, technology, advocacy, and dozens of other specialties, PATH develops and scales solutions when and where they are needed most—including vaccines, drugs, devices, diagnostics, and innovative approaches to strengthening health systems worldwide.

PATH has been contributing to Myanmar’s health care transformation since 2012 and supports the government’s commitment to achieve universal health coverage by 2030. PATH works with the government, nongovernmental actors, and the private sector to leverage partnerships, policy advocacy, new technologies, and innovative approaches to address inequities in key health areas—nutrition, vaccines and immunization, sexual and reproductive health, infectious diseases, and noncommunicable diseases.

Areas of focus

Nutrition

In Myanmar, almost one-third of children are stunted, a sign of chronic malnutrition. And children are not alone: many people do not consume a balanced diet with the appropriate vitamins and minerals, which has lifelong consequences for their health, productivity, and mental development. PATH’s work in nutrition includes:

- Supporting the National Nutrition Center to introduce rice fortification in Myanmar, a unique approach that enriches the country’s most popular staple food with vitamins and minerals.
- Developing national policies and guidelines for rice fortification and nutrition, and assisting the food industry and private sector in best production practices.
- Engaging both private- and social-sector partners in distributing fortified foods and ensuring that nutrition reaches underprivileged families and vulnerable groups through social safety net programs.
- Generating sustainable consumer demand for nutritious food through marketing, outreach campaigns, and behavior change communication.

Vaccines and immunization

PATH works with the Central Expanded Program on Immunization under the Ministry of Health and Sports to introduce new vaccines and strengthen national immunization systems. PATH’s work in vaccines includes:

- Introducing the Japanese encephalitis vaccine in Myanmar and supporting a national campaign to vaccinate more than 13 million children against the deadly disease.
- Strengthening immunization systems broadly, including establishing processes for safe disposal of health care waste and needles, and gathering evidence to support and scale up the approach.

Sexual, reproductive, maternal, newborn, and child health

As women embrace new freedoms in Myanmar, they continue to face challenges in sexual and reproductive health and rights. Only about half of all married women use a modern method of contraception, and rates of maternal and child mortality remain high. PATH’s work in sexual, reproductive, maternal, newborn, and child health includes:

- Supporting the government in developing new policies and guidelines: PATH assisted the Ministry of Health and Sports in developing the National Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Policy, as well as launching the country’s first guidelines for secondary prevention of cervical cancer.
Midwives practice using needle cutters—devices PATH introduced in Myanmar to ensure health workers and communities do not risk infection from improperly disposed needles.

- Implementing and translating policy, plans, and guidelines into practice by training and bringing together decision-makers, health care providers, and communities.
- Introducing and scaling up innovative tools for identifying childhood illnesses, including a device that measures oxygen level in the blood and digital decision-making tools for health workers, thus contributing to reduction of mortality in children under five years of age.

**Infectious diseases**

Myanmar has a high prevalence of infectious diseases, with rates of HIV and tuberculosis (TB) the second highest in Southeast Asia. PATH is exploring partnership opportunities to develop digital tools and innovative systems to enable more consistent HIV and TB prevention, testing, and treatment. We are also paving the way for safe, effective, and high-quality malaria care, including developing plans and guidelines for radical cure using new technology to test for a specific enzyme deficiency among malaria patients, which can complicate treatment.

**Noncommunicable diseases**

Development and economic growth in Myanmar have brought many opportunities, along with changes to people's lifestyles. Poor lifestyle choices—alcohol and tobacco consumption, unhealthy diets—and an aging population have led to an increased incidence of noncommunicable diseases. The World Health Organization estimates that noncommunicable diseases account for 40 percent of all deaths in Myanmar. Building on our work in cervical cancer, PATH seeks to support the prevention and treatment of other common cancers in Myanmar. PATH is also exploring partnership opportunities to address other noncommunicable diseases, such as hypertension and diabetes.

**Digital health**

Mobile phones and internet technology have become increasingly accessible and affordable in Myanmar, changing the way people engage with information and with one another. This offers a huge opportunity to use digital technology to address long-standing issues in health care service delivery. Leveraging our global work in digital health and our Center of Digital and Data Excellence, PATH aims to support the design, development, and implementation of health management information systems, from analysis to deployment.
Partner with us

Strategic partnerships are at the core of PATH’s achievements in Myanmar. Partnerships will remain critical as we expand our programming to address key health issues in the country, including nutrition, vaccines and immunization, sexual and reproductive health, infectious diseases, and noncommunicable diseases.

Think you’d like to work with us? Contact us at myanmar@path.org.

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On the cover: May Thet Khaing, a laboratory technician, works at the Food Industries Development Supporting Laboratory in Myanmar. She and her team test fortified rice kernels and other enriched foods for their micronutrient composition. Enriching rice with vitamins and minerals helps improve nutrition and well-being in Myanmar.

Photos: PATH/Minzayar Oo