



# Haitian Health Foundation

La mission de la Fondation Haïtienne de la Santé consiste à améliorer la santé et le bien-être des femmes, des enfants, des familles et des communautés par le biais des soins de santé, l'éducation et le développement communautaire.

May 10, 2021

TO: WHO Expert Committee on the Selection and Use of Essential Medicines

FROM: Haitian Health Foundation

RE: To express support of the application to the WHO Essential Medicines List for Multiple Micronutrient Supplementation for pregnant women

Dear Expert Committee,

This is to present the compliment of the Haitian Health Foundation (HHF) and to express our support in favor of adding *Multiple Micronutrient Supplements (MMS) – Antenatal Supplement* on the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines (EML).

The Haitian Health Foundation (HHF) is a non-profit organization with a mission to improve the health and well-being of women, children, families and communities through health care, education and community development. HHF began its official operation in the Department of the Grande-Anse, Haiti in 1985, and since then, its growth throughout the Grande-Anse and beyond has been robust, fueled by a good record of performance providing excellent services to meet the needs of the areas it serves.

Health care services at HHF are offered to over 250,000 people (individuals from inside and outside our catchment health service area) in three settings: clinic-based, community health, and residential and our services include:

- perinatal and well-baby care
- HIV testing, especially in pregnant women
- management of common childhood illnesses
- early identification of HIV-infected children and appropriate management
- residential medical care for severely malnourished children and women with high-risk pregnancies
- disease prevention and management
- cervical screening
- vaccinations
- vitamin distribution
- diabetes management

- family planning and reproductive health, and
- dental and mental health services, including an extensive school-based oral health education and prevention program.

One of HHF's strategic goal is to promote the nutrition, health and wellbeing of women and children by addressing micronutrient deficiencies, food safety and quality, child and maternal nutrition, healthy and sustainable diets, consumer behavior including family planning, food choice and accessibility.

Haiti's infant mortality rate is 59 per 1,000 live births and approximately 22% of children under the age of 5 experience stunting<sup>1</sup>. UNICEF estimates that there are 55,000 cases of acute malnutrition, including 18,000 severe cases, in children under the age of five<sup>2</sup>. Malnourishment among women of reproductive age remains prevalent: 49% of women ages 15-49 have anemia<sup>3</sup>. Micronutrient deficiency during pregnancy remains a major public health problem in Haiti. Evidence from clinical trials has concluded that antenatal MMS is superior to iron and folic acid (IFA) supplementation in improving birth outcomes, and has equivalent benefits for preventing maternal anaemia.

Haiti's National Guiding Health Plan has laid the foundation for combating micronutrient deficiencies in its Strategy 2.3.6. This action plan outlines micronutrient supplementation for pregnant women and nutritional surveillance for pregnant women. The plan laid out activities used to follow through on this strategy including the strengthening of routine micronutrient supplementation services. Technical nutrition committees and sectoral groups exist in ten departments of Haiti and are regularly working with local authorities and organizations to ensure better integration of the Multiple Micronutrient Supplementation into communities.

It is the opinion of HHF that adding the MMS on the Essential Medical List will be a key step towards supporting the efforts of the Haitian government and the civil society to scale MMS in Haiti. The inclusion of MMS on the EML will particularly encourage the integration of MMS in our nutrition programming and will facilitate the importing process of the product on the national territory. We strongly urge that Multiple Micronutrient Supplementation be accepted as an item on the WHO EML.

Sincerely,



Nadesha Mijoba, MS, MPH  
Haiti Country Director

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<sup>1</sup>Institut Haïtien de l'Enfance (IHE) et ICF. 2018. *Enquête Mortalité, Morbidité et Utilisation des Services (EMMUS-VI 2016-2017)* Pétiön-Ville, Haïti, et Rockville, Maryland, USA : IHE et ICF

<sup>2</sup>UNICEF. Haiti Factsheets. <https://www.unicef.org/haiti/media/626/file/Fact-Sheet-f%C3%A9vrier-2019.pdf> Updated February 2019. Accessed January 18, 2020

<sup>3</sup>USAID. Haiti: Nutrition Profile. <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1864/Haiti-Nutrition-Profile-Mar2018-508.pdf> Updated February 2018. Accessed January 18, 2020