

ACCESS TO CONTRACEPTION IS CRITICAL IN COVID-19 RESPONSE

FP2020 Statement



The COVID-19 pandemic has had, and will continue to have, a profound impact on the lives of people across the globe, as well as health and social systems, and national economies. This upheaval will also have a profound impact on access to family planning information and services, as well as sexual and reproductive health more broadly.

Despite this disruption, the *need* for family planning will not change. For most women, family planning is critical, basic health care. As health systems shift to prevent and treat people with COVID-19, it is essential they also protect voluntary access to family planning services. Throughout the crisis, Family Planning 2020 will work with country and global partners to ensure family planning remains a priority service in countries' COVID-19 response plans.

FP2020 will be sharing resources for maintaining access to family planning on our [COVID-19 resource page](#). To contribute resources to the page, [please email Cate Urban](#).

This includes ensuring women and girls still have access to a range of contraceptive methods of their choice, whether from health centers, pharmacies, or through delivery to their homes. We echo the [U.N. Secretary-General](#)'s call for access to contraception without prescription during the crisis. When regular health care services are disrupted, access to long-acting and emergency contraceptives becomes even more essential. In areas where communities have been ordered to shelter-in-place, people must be allowed to travel to seek sexual and reproductive health care.

We must ensure healthcare providers are still available for family planning service delivery. As the workforce shifts to testing for and treating people with COVID-19, or as health workers themselves fall victim to the virus, health systems must plan to ensure continuity of care, whether through partnering with non-traditional providers or using telehealth where available.

To do this, country and their global partners must also ensure that [supplies are available](#). With borders closed and production disrupted, this will require national health systems to partner with the private sector and others to ensure commodities can flow through supply chains — from manufacturer to the point of service.

Humanitarian agencies have extensive experience delivering critical reproductive health services — including family planning — in crisis settings. While health services have been disrupted, many of the [lessons distilled](#) by the Inter-Agency Working Group on Reproductive Health in Crises are applicable to ensuring that women continue to have access to contraception.

As countries determine how to deliver essential health services in the face of this global pandemic, FP2020 [has created a platform](#) to ensure key information from global experts about access to family planning during this crisis is getting into the hands of the decisionmakers and program implementers

who need it. Likewise, we will be sharing experiences of our country partners and the lessons they are learning, including how the virus is having an impact on their work and the strategies they are using to continue service delivery. We will disseminate these resources via email, social media, and through webinars in the coming days and weeks.

The freedom to make informed decisions about whether and when to have children does not end in a time of crisis. Family planning is a critical element of health care for women and girls and FP2020 and our partners will continue to work to ensure that all people have the care, services, and supplies they need.