

ANOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen, please give a warm welcome to Patty Mechael and the partners of mPowering Frontline Health Workers. (Applause.)

PATRICIA MECHAEL: Good afternoon. I am very proud to be here with you today on behalf of the mHealth Alliance and 10 incredible partners to tell you about mPowering Frontline Health Workers. This innovative public-private partnership has been designed to improve child health by accelerating the use of mobile technology by millions of health workers around the world. I'd like to take a moment to introduce my colleagues who are here with me on the stage as well as a few we were unable to join us.

From USAID, Amy Batson; deputy assistant administrator for global health. From UNICEF, Dr. Mickey Chopra; chief of health. From Intel, Alice Borrelli, director of global health care policy. From Qualcomm, Dean Brenner; vice president of government affairs. The chair of the Frontline Health Workers Coalition, Mary Beth Powers. From GlaxoSmithKline, Dr. Ellen Strahlman; senior vice president. From the NDG Health Alliance, Brad Palmer; vice chair of the Community Health Worker Pillar.

I'd also like to thank three partners who couldn't be there today – Vodafone Group; and Absolute Return for Kids, based in London; and the Praekelt Foundation, producers of the wonderful video you just viewed based in South Africa.

And we wouldn't be here today if it weren't for Sandhya Rao in the Bureau for Global Health at USAID. She conceived this partnership and worked collaboratively with all of the partners over the last six months to make this moment a reality.

Over the past few years, I've had the privilege to actively engage firsthand in programs throughout Africa that leverage mobile technologies to transform how frontline health workers register and track newborns and children under 5 to improve early diagnosis, treatment and referral for conditions such as diarrhea, malaria and pneumonia.

As you just heard in the video, frontline health workers, including community health workers, nurses and midwives, are the first and often only link to the health care system for millions of people living in the developing world. They are critical in settings where overall primary health care systems are weak or inaccessible.

Although they are the backbone of health systems in these resource-constrained environments, they face numerous challenges, weak performance incentives, difficulty reaching remote populations, a lack of supportive supervision and insufficient real-time access to patient data and reference information.

Mobile connectivity, now pervasive in the developing world, offers a revolutionary opportunity to recruit, retain, retrain and support frontline health workers and address the many challenges they face in delivering high quality health services.

Mobile health – or mHealth – provides frontline health workers with immediate access to timely and relevant health information and the tools they need to improve and save the lives of

millions of children. This new partnership will empower frontline health workers by expanding the use of appropriate, cost-effective and sustainable and scalable mobile technologies in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

I am overwhelmed by the incredible wealth of expertise and resources that these 10 partners have committed over the next three years. We at the mHealth Alliance are happy to announce that we will serve as the partnership secretariat, executing on the vision, evaluating the outcomes and sharing lessons learned with the global development community.

We invite you to join us as we embark on this new journey. Together, we will scale up effective mobile technologies, empower frontline health workers and ultimately improve and save the lives of millions of children around the world. Thank you, and have a good afternoon. (Applause.)

(Begin video presentation.)

NARRATOR: Today we celebrate with the untold millions of children who are alive because they received vaccinations or oral rehydration salts or because their mothers understood the importance of breastfeeding. But there are millions of other children who have not been reached, children who are living precarious and fragile lives.

To reach them is going to require renewed dedication from faith-based communities, civil society and the private sector. These children deserve the same rights as children in the developed world. They have the right to good health. Their parents have the right to see them grow up. Their societies have the right to benefit from their contribution. And those who have the technology, expertise and resources have the obligation to ensure that it happens.

The advances of the last three decades have placed us in an extraordinary and privileged position. We have the science. We have the knowledge. We have the experience. We have the tools to not only end preventable child deaths but to ensure that every child has a life beyond survival. We stand on the brink of a remarkable achievement.

What is needed is an unprecedented global commitment to go farther, to not only accelerate momentum to meet millennium development goals four and give but to map out a longer-term plan using the most up-to-date thinking.

Working together, faith-based communities, civil society and the private sector can reach every child, empower every mother and ensure that no family has to mourn a child whose death could have been prevented. It's a promise renewed.

(End video presentation.)