

Children's Health

Helping Children Survive To Five

(NAPSA)—The amount it costs to help save a child's life may surprise you—it's much less than you might imagine.

The main killers of children 5 and under globally are complications during birth, pneumonia, diarrhea and measles. These causes, not generally life-threatening in the U.S., claim nearly 27,000 young lives each day, many not even a month old.

"Two thirds of these lives could be saved with low-cost services and practices that are readily available, such as a solution of salts, sugar and clean water to treat diarrhea, vaccinations, antibiotics to treat pneumonia and exclusive breastfeeding," said David Oot, associate vice president of Save the Children, a global independent humanitarian organization.

The cost is not high. Antibiotics to treat pneumonia can cost as little as 30 cents. A child can be immunized against six major childhood diseases for as little as \$17, and a twice-yearly dose of vitamin A capsules costs just a few cents. Yet, these tools are not available to all mothers and babies living in developing countries.

An alliance of global health groups composing the U.S. Coalition for Child Survival are hoping to change that. They are asking Congress to increase funding to expand maternal and child health interventions globally.

"Funding for the survival of the world's children is among the best investments of our foreign assistance dollars," said Andrew Barrer, executive direc-



Many of the world's children do not live until their fifth birthday. Fortunately, lifesaving interventions are low-cost and effective.

tor for the U.S. Coalition for Child Survival.

Americans agree. In a recent national poll conducted by the coalition, almost all Americans surveyed placed saving children's lives as a top priority for U.S. international assistance, and a large majority of Americans (84 percent) support increasing funding to reduce the top preventable deaths of the youngest children. Eight in 10 Americans polled approved new legislation before Congress that would provide additional support for maternal and child health programs in developing countries.

Save the Children recently launched a new effort, Survive to 5, that gives Americans ways to help children worldwide grow up to celebrate their fifth birthday.

To learn more, visit www.savethechildren.org.