



## International Connections

## Council of International Neonatal Nurses, Inc. (COINN) Update



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## ABSTRACT

Today, prematurity and its effects on neonates, families, and societies are on the global policy stages. The recognition that most prematurity is preventable creates the “perfect storm” for professional organizations, private and public corporations, non-governmental organizations, and governmental groups to collaborate to improve health outcomes for this most vulnerable population. The Council of International Neonatal Nurse, Inc. (COINN) represents neonatal nursing globally to bring the nursing perspective to this work. This column features an update on the *Every Newborn Action Plan*.

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The Council of International Neonatal Nurses, Inc. (COINN), founded in 2005 unites neonatal nurses globally by advocating for policy changes to improve health outcomes for neonates and their families. COINN's founding coincided with the release of *The Lancet* series “*Neonatal Survival*.”<sup>1</sup> This report brought the problem of neonatal and child mortality to the forefront of policy makers, governments, non-governmental organizations, parent organizations, and professional associations. The headlines read “4 million neonatal deaths: When? Where? Why?”<sup>1</sup> Four million! Incredible. Almost the same number was stillbirths and 0.5 million mothers were dying. Neonates were dying, for the most part on the day they were born. Stillbirths were hard to track, as not all were officially reported. Maternal deaths were related to pregnancy complications and the greatest deaths were in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Central Asia. The causes of death, or the “why” for neonates were prematurity, infections, and asphyxia – all potentially preventable.<sup>1</sup> The United Nations committed to working on Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)<sup>2</sup> and charged countries and organizations to join in this fight. COINN did just that. MDGs 4 and 5 focus on reducing child mortality under five and maternal mortality. Almost 15 years later much work has been done to improve these statistics yet there is still much more that must be completed before all preventable deaths are a thing of the past.

## Every Newborn Organization

Dr. Joy Lawn continues to challenge organizations to step up and commit resources to improving the health outcomes. Two initiatives that are at the forefront of this work are “Every Woman, Every Child” and “Every Newborn”. Both of these address the preventable deaths for neonates and mothers. In May, 2012 the March of Dimes, The Partnership for Maternal, Newborn, & Child Health, Save the Children,

and the World Health Organization (WHO) released a report called “*Born Too Soon: The Global Action Report on Preterm Birth*.”<sup>3</sup> This report represented over 50 organizations working together to develop a call to action. COINN was only one of two nursing organizations that participated in this report. A call to action is a great start but what is really needed is an action plan. To that end Every Woman, Every Child and the Every Newborn Organization ([www.everynewborn.org](http://www.everynewborn.org)) have posted a draft global action plan ([http://www.who.int/maternal\\_child\\_adolescent/topics/newborn/enap\\_consultation/en/](http://www.who.int/maternal_child_adolescent/topics/newborn/enap_consultation/en/)) to address the causes of neonatal and maternal mortality. Targets have been set to reduce the mortality rates and this work is led by WHO and UNICEF. This plan is bold and calls for a global Neonatal Mortality rate of 7 per 1000 live births by 2035; a rate for stillbirths at 8 per 1000 live births; and for maternal deaths to almost zero.<sup>3</sup> The focus is on providing universal coverage for health care globally, to use a life course approach that includes preconception health through child/adult health to promote health and long term complications of preterm birth are included. Four areas that focus on the provision of quality care with the use of innovation are: health workforce, commodities and technologies, health information systems, as well as community empowerment and healthy home behaviors.<sup>4</sup> The latter is focused on the need to include parents and community partners in the work; to hear their voices and to have them spread the word about the dangers of preterm birth. A perinatal database that is kept up-to-date and provides information about where targets are being met and where they are not is critical to the work. For neonatal care, it is imperative that the number of neonatal nurses available, where they work, and where they are needed are known. COINN received a grant from AbbVie to create this database. Prevention measures for neonates again focus on the prevention of preterm birth; the use of kangaroo mother care packages to promote neonatal stability and breastfeeding; use of antenatal steroids to combat respiratory complications from prematurity; newborn resuscitation – thus promoting programs like Helping Babies Breathe, S.T.A.B.L.E., Neonatal Resuscitation, and the treatment of neonatal infections.<sup>4</sup>

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To provide leadership and training in the areas of prevention, COINN with support from AbbVie created three webinars to address areas on neonatal assessment, neonatal infections, and family-centered developmental care — available at no cost on the COINN website ([www.coinnurses.org](http://www.coinnurses.org)). In addition, COINN through the same grant, started an onsite leadership development with the first pilot being held in Sao Paulo, Brazil (December, 2014).

COINN is on the advisory group for the Every Newborn Action Plan (ENAP). Neonatal nursing's voice, as part of an integrated solution, is being heard. This is policy work at a global level, but it requires a grassroots approach with commitment to training, education, and perinatal/neonatal outreach on a global level. We are at the table and at the forefront of change. We are recognized as being critical to the success of any action plan. Neonatal nursing's work is becoming

visible. With your help we will continue to change the outcomes for the neonates and families we serve.

## References

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