

## Vital Strategies 2019 Program Priorities

Vital Strategies envisions a world where every person is protected by a strong public health system. We work with governments across 73 countries to design and support scalable solutions to leading health problems. Often these problems are the most common drivers of death and disease but aren't receiving the attention they deserve. Our work is driven by local partners and informed by country context, with a focus on evidence-based policy and regulatory strategies. Working this way, we believe we can make the biggest different among the largest number of people.

### Air Quality

An estimated 90% of people in the world breathe unhealthy air. Our Environmental Health division is focused on assessing and reducing the negative health effects of air pollution. We urge city and national governments to:

- Rapidly and economically assess local sources of air pollution and develop management plans to accelerate improvements in air quality;
- Scale up access to clean household fuels, public transit infrastructure and other interventions to reduce emissions that can rapidly lead to health benefits; and
- Develop evidence-based public and strategic communication messages about air quality and its health effects.

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### Alcohol Policy

Although the harmful use of alcohol is responsible for 3 million deaths a year, it is inadequately countered with public health solutions. High-impact strategies that reduce harmful use result in declines in death, disease, suicide, homicide, physical abuse and disability. Government priorities should align with World Health Organization's (WHO) technical action package, the SAFER initiative, which calls for:

- Strengthening restrictions on alcohol availability;
- Advancing and enforcing drink driving countermeasures;
- Facilitating access to screening, brief interventions and treatment;
- Enforcing bans or comprehensive restrictions on alcohol advertising, sponsorship, and promotion; and
- Raising prices on alcohol through taxes and pricing policies.

## Cardiovascular Health

Vital Strategies is working to address the world's leading killer—cardiovascular disease—using proven interventions including reducing salt intake, eliminating trans fat from all foods, and controlling blood pressure. We tackle these issues in line with WHO's technical packages:

### WHO SHAKE package to reduce salt:

- Surveillance: measure and monitor salt use.
- Harness industry: promote the reformulation of foods and meals to contain less salt.
- Adopt and implement standards for effective, accurate labeling and marketing of food.
- Knowledge: Educate and communicate to empower individuals to eat less salt.
- Environment: Support settings to promote healthy eating.

### WHO REPLACE package to eliminate trans fat:

- Review dietary sources of industrially-produced trans fat and the landscape for required policy change.
- Promote the replacement of industrially-produced trans fat with healthier fats and oils.
- Legislate or enact regulatory actions to eliminate industrially-produced trans fat.
- Assess and monitor trans fat content in the food supply and changes in trans fat consumption in the population.

- Create awareness of the negative health impact of trans fat among policy-makers, producers, suppliers, and the public.
- Enforce compliance with policies and regulations.

### We prioritize components of the WHO HEARTS package to reduce high blood pressure:

- Evidence-based treatment protocols;
- Access to essential medicines and technology;
- Team-based care; and
- Systems for monitoring.

## Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS)

With advances in methods and technology, it's now possible to count every human life. More accurate birth and death records inform government priorities, programs and policies. They also increase access to social benefits from health insurance to inheritance. At Vital Strategies, we collaborate with governments to strengthen civil registration systems by:

- Developing legal and regulatory frameworks for CRVS consistent with international best practice;
- Investing in technical capacity to register and count at least 80% of deaths and every birth;
- Developing capacity to produce reliable vital statistics and cause of death data; and
- Establishing systems to measure and describe patterns of mortality in places where most deaths occur at home.

## Epidemic Preparedness

New disease outbreaks are inevitable. Our ability to respond to them depends on action that governments take now. Our team supports country efforts to find, stop and prevent epidemics. We work with governments and other partners to:

- Address gaps in key areas of epidemic preparedness, including: emergency preparedness, emergency response operations, national laboratory systems, disease surveillance, national legislation, policy and financing, human resources and risk communication;
- Invest in national systems to prevent epidemics;
- Create enabling environments for sustained preparedness; and
- Complete a WHO joint external evaluation, develop a plan to address any gaps and fund the plan.

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## Healthy Cities

Vital Strategies, together with WHO, is implementing the Partnership for Healthy Cities across more than 54 cities worldwide. We offer technical assistance, seed grants, capacity building opportunities, and communications support to city governments to prevent noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) and injuries. We aim to:

- Implement WHO 'best buys' and other recommended interventions for NCD and injury prevention, including healthier diets, tobacco control, drink driving, and active and safe mobility;
- Create a dynamic global network that connects mayors and public health leaders in cities and supports peer exchange; and
- Promote and support mayors as public health leaders.

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## Lead Poisoning Prevention

Childhood lead poisoning causes chronic disability to the brain and body that will last a lifetime, but it can be prevented. We propose that governments:

- Improve surveillance and case management to address children's exposure;
- Strengthen or enact legislation to ban lead-based paints and control other environmental exposure; and
- Increase public awareness of the issue to reduce young children's exposure.

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## Obesity Prevention

One-third of the world's population are overweight or obese, including 42 million children under age 5. Obesity and poor diet are major drivers of cancer, heart disease and diabetes. Obesity is a growing problem in low- and middle-income countries, placing a huge burden on individuals, governments and society. To combat these problems, we ask governments to focus on evidence-based policy interventions:

- Taxes on sugary drinks;
- Front-of-pack food warning labels;
- Restriction on marketing of unhealthy foods and drinks, especially to children; and
- Limiting unhealthy food and drink in schools and other institutional settings.

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## Overdose Prevention

More than 70,000 people in the United States died as a result of an overdose in 2017, exceeding all other forms of accidental death in the country and annually representing an estimated one-quarter of overdose deaths worldwide. Millions more suffer from substance use disorder and collateral harms, from medical to social to economic. Vital Strategies is demonstrating and promoting a set of best practices approaches and evidence-based solutions for preventing and reducing overdoses in the U.S. by:

- Increasing access to and utilization of medications for overdose reversal and treatment to people across all settings and especially in vulnerable contexts;
- Extending and building community-based syringe service and harm reduction programs for people who use drugs;
- Reducing the criminalization of people who use drugs by facilitating and augmenting harm reduction services in lieu of arrest or incarceration; and
- Conducting media campaigns to improve public education, engagement and access to resources and reduction of stigma.

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## Road Safety

Road traffic injuries are the leading killer of people age 5-29 and are a particularly acute problem in low- and middle-income countries. We work in 10 cities to reduce deaths and injuries with an aim of protecting the most vulnerable road users, especially pedestrians. We advise:

- Enhancing and enforcing speed limits and implementing road designs that encourage slower, safer driving;
- Enhancing and enforcing drink driving-related traffic laws;
- Mandating compulsory motorcycle helmets use; and
- Promoting use of seat-belts and child restraints.

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## Tobacco Control

More than 1 billion people are projected to die of tobacco-related disease in the 21st century. We seek to save 100 million lives by curtailing tobacco use in those countries with the largest populations and the highest prevalence. We are guided by the WHO's technical package, MPOWER, which prioritizes:

- Monitoring tobacco use and prevention policies;
- Protecting people from tobacco smoke by encouraging smoke-free environments.
- Offering users help to quit tobacco;
- Warning the public about the dangers of tobacco;
- Enforcing bans on tobacco advertising, marketing and sponsorship; and
- Raising tobacco taxes.

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## Tuberculosis Management

Multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) represents an intractable challenge. MDR-TB can require treatment regimens of up to 20 months, with risks of severe side effects. As part of TREAT TB, Vital Strategies and its partners are implementing STREAM—the first large-scale, multi-country clinical trial to evaluate standardized, shortened regimens for MDR-TB. To successfully treat MDR-TB we fight for:

- Additional research to identify new drugs and more tolerable treatments for MDR-TB;
- Simplified regulatory frameworks, including import and export requirements, for clinical trials;
- Greater commitment to expanding MDR-TB diagnosis and treatment; and
- Increased use of data to improve MDR-TB program implementation and outcomes.