

**For Immediate Release**

**July 31, 2017**

**PRESS RELEASE**

### ***15 Innovators Get Funding from Saving Lives at Birth***

*International Partnership Invests \$7.3 Million to Accelerate Innovations that Prevent Maternal, Newborn Deaths and Stillbirth in the Hardest-to-Reach Regions of the World*

**WASHINGTON, DC** – After a rigorous review process and competition, 15 of the world’s most promising ideas to save lives at birth in developing countries have edged out over 550 other applicants, securing millions in new funding to develop and refine their innovations.

From an on-site chlorine generator to prevent infection to a breakthrough fingerprint scanning technology for newborn prints, *Saving Lives at Birth: A Grand Challenge for Development* will invest more than \$7.3 million in groundbreaking solutions to protect and support mothers and newborns throughout pregnancy, but with a particular emphasis on the 48 hour window around the time of delivery – when they are most vulnerable. The announcement was made on July 27<sup>th</sup>, at the seventh annual Development<sup>X</sup>Change in Washington, DC, the program’s signature event bringing together a community of global entrepreneurs to develop transformational solutions for maternal and newborn survival, and prevention of stillbirth, with the goal of making them accessible to the poorest, most remote communities in the world.

The 15 award nominees were selected from more than 550 submissions, with roughly half of the applications coming from low-and middle-income countries. Half of the award nominees themselves are previous SL@B grantees who are continuing to thrive and move through the program pipeline. All of the award nominees are now part of a growing community of over 100 innovators supported by the *Saving Lives at Birth* partnership.

The two-day Development<sup>X</sup>Change also included a pitch competition featuring 11 entrepreneurs who had received previous support from *Saving Lives at Birth*, and are now showing great promise for potential partnership and further investment. This year, the SL@B partnership offered two prizes for the winners of the Pitch Competition – six months of communication support from global firm McCann Global Health, as well as a sponsored trip to the annual Acting on the Call event, to be held in Ethiopia this year.

Mbarara University, who is developing the Augmented Infant Resuscitator (AIR), won the pitch competition. PremieBreathe, out of Yale University, was named the runner-up for their project testing and implementation of low-cost breathing aid for infants in Tigray, Ethiopia. This year, there was record-breaking participation in the honorary *People’s Choice Award*, with over 10,000 votes cast. Avigo Health, LLC received the most votes for their Warranty on Womanhood project. Boston Children’s Hospital won the *Peer Choice Award* for their Infant Warmer project, developing an inexpensive, re-usable, non-electric, innovation for neonatal care.



A PARTNERSHIP OF



BILL & MELINDA GATES foundation



Award nominees for *Saving Lives at Birth's* Seventh Call for innovations include:

#### Four (4) Seed Award Nominees:

- **FREO2 Foundation Australia (Bundoora, Australia):** To develop FREO2 Solar - a battery-free, solar-powered oxygen system for small health facilities.
- **Preterm Birth Initiative East Africa (San Francisco, USA):** To develop a hands-free "Virtual Mentor" to audibly interact with and support birth attendants during postpartum hemorrhage.
- **Simprints Technology Limited (Cambridge, United Kingdom):** To develop fingerprinting technology for identifying newborns to improve health delivery and protect against neonate exploitation.
- **University College London (London, United Kingdom):** To develop a low-cost, reliable smartphone app for the diagnosis of severe jaundice using non-invasive techniques based on sclera color.

#### Seven (7) Validation Award Nominees:

- **The American Academy of Pediatrics (Elk Grove, USA):** To validate NeoBeat, a newborn heart rate monitor and educational training program to address birth asphyxia and misclassification of stillbirths
- **Massachusetts General Hospital/PATH (USA):** To validate a newborn respiratory package consisting of a low-cost bubble CPAP (bCPAP) device, oxygen blender, nasal prongs, and pulse oximeter, along with best-evidence training materials
- **PATH (Seattle, USA):** To validate an affordable, one-step, at-home rapid diagnostic test for urinary adipsin, a biomarker for preeclampsia
- **PATH (Seattle, USA):** To validate SE Flow, an onsite, easy-to-use chlorine generator for infection prevention and control in labor wards
- **Shift Labs, Inc. (Seattle, USA):** To validate the DripAssist, an infusion monitoring device to improve the administration of medications during labor to prevent postpartum hemorrhage, preeclampsia, and eclampsia
- **Sisu Global Health (Baltimore, USA):** To validate Hemafuse, an autologous blood transfusion device for safe access to blood for mothers suffering from ruptured ectopic pregnancies
- **William Marsh Rice University (Houston, USA):** To validate BiliSpec, a low-cost bilirubin diagnostic and monitoring tool for neonatal jaundice

#### Four (4) Transition-to-Scale Award nominees:

- **Bempu Health Private Limited (Bangalore, India):** To scale the BEMPU Hypothermia Alert Device, a temperature-monitoring wristband enabling response to newborn hypothermia
- **Gradian Health Systems (New York, USA):** To scale up specialized training and technology provision for reliable anesthesia to improve surgical and obstetric care
- **Mbarara University of Science and Technology (Mbarara, Uganda):** To scale up a compatible add-on to existing resuscitation devices to enable proper ventilation of newborns to avert birth asphyxia
- **Simprints Technology Limited (Cambridge, United Kingdom):** To scale up accurate, inexpensive mobile biometrics for reliable patient identification for newborns and mothers

Additional projects in all categories are under consideration, and will be announced at a later date.



## About *Saving Lives at Birth*

The *Saving Lives at Birth* partnership, launched in 2011, includes the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Grand Challenges Canada (funded by the Government of Canada), the U.K.'s Department for International Development (DFID) and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). It is a global call for groundbreaking, scalable solutions to end infant and maternal mortality around the time of birth.

*Saving Lives at Birth* aims to address the 303,000 maternal deaths, 2.7 million neonatal deaths, and 2.6 million stillbirths that occur each year around the world. To date, successful *Saving Lives at Birth* innovations are already beginning to scale, supporting over 1.5 million women and newborns and saving approximately 10,000 lives.

To learn more about *Saving Lives at Birth* and its portfolio of innovators working in maternal and newborn health, go to: [www.savinglivesatbirth.net](http://www.savinglivesatbirth.net)



A  
PARTNERSHIP  
OF



BILL & MELINDA  
GATES foundation

