Weekly News Roundup – 24 March 2017

This week saw more proof, if it were needed, that promoting access to family planning and contraception can have dramatic results. A report in the UK showed that teen pregnancy had halved in the past decade, and Colorado’s aggressive investment in family planning service from 2009-2014 delivered $5.85 in savings for every $1 invested, and is being replicated in other states.

The debate in the US continues about funding domestic and international healthcare, including the last-minute withdrawal of the replacement plan for Obamacare, and the potential effects of the global gag rule in countries like South Africa and Uganda.

The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) World Congress in South Africa addressed a range of issues, including how to reduce the 50,000 preventable deaths from unsafe abortion each year. Reducing stigma – in the public and in the medical community – is key, according to the RCOG president.

At the event, Kenyan First Lady Margaret Kenyatta was lauded for her “commitment to end maternal and child mortality”. Her country saw a call for increased investment in reproductive health spending, as doctors resumed work after a 100-day strike.

Debates about abortion are taking different forms in Angola, which saw protests against a law to completely ban them, in Malawi, where the issue is an element of the concern about the population boom, and in Zambia, where it is legal but practical access is severely limited.

The WHO issued an important guide to identifying and documenting best practices in family planning.

It was World Water Day and one article noted the importance of clean water in maternal health.

Finally, two interesting pieces on reproductive health and maternal care on the front lines – in the largest Syrian refugee camp and in rural DRC – remind us of the ubiquity of the need to improve access, information and service.

Complete News Review References:

General

Teenage pregnancy rates hit all-time low after nearly halving in last eight years, Independent (UK), 24 Mar 2017

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The Colorado Family Planning Miracle, Sightline Institute, 23 Mar 2017

Go inside a maternity ward at the world’s largest Syrian refugee camp, PRI, 22 Mar 2017

Hearts and minds must be changed to support safe abortion care and family planning, RCOG President tells international congress, RCOG, 21 Mar 2017

Birth spacing, and the information and tools to do it, can save women’s and children’s lives, STAT, 21 Mar 2017

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Girls in crisis settings overlooked for life-saving care, say health advocates, ReliefWeb, 20 Mar 2017

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Angola

Angola Is on Its Way to Ban Abortion Entirely and Women Are Fighting Back, Global Voices, 22 Mar 2017

Protests against abortion bill in Angola, Deutsche Welle, 18 Mar 2017

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DRC

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Let's consolidate devolution gains, Business Daily, 21 Mar 2017
Only sex education will save the young from HIV/Aids, The Standard, 19 Mar 2017

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Let us prevent unsafe abortion, The Times, 24 Mar 2017
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Nigerian govt deployed 1,473 graduate midwives to PHCs in 2016 – Official, Premium Times, 22 Mar 2017
Kaduna: Rural women demand family planning services from govt, Daily Trust, 22 Mar 2017
FG lauds UNFPA intervention on population, humanitarian services, Nigerian Tribune, 21 Mar 2017

Mixed reactions trail Emir Sanusi’s proposed family law, Daily Trust, 21 Mar 2017

Aisha’s Buhari’s call on infant mortality, Nigerian Tribune, 20 Mar 2017

Young Secondary Schoolgirl Dies from Abortion, Nairaland, 20 Mar 2017

Rwanda


South Africa

“Forget family planning and focus on studies”, Zoutnet, 20 Mar 2017

US Gag Rule to cause more abortion-related deaths, Daily Maverick, 20 Mar 2017

Free Zimbabwean contraceptives smuggled for sale in South Africa, Ground Up, 19 Mar 2017

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Japan, UNFPA power up health clinic, ReliefWeb, 16 Mar 2017

Uganda

From Here To Uganda: Why U.S. Leadership On Reproductive Rights Matters, Huffington Post, 23 Mar 2017

More maternal deaths due to lack of water, Winfred Ongy, 22 Mar 2017

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United Nations agency vouches for hospital deliveries in Busoga, The Observer, 22 Mar 2017

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Minister Opendi decries high maternal deaths, New Vision, 22 Mar 2017

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