



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.

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General

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