Unmet need for contraception affects 225 million women who want to avoid pregnancy but are not using safe and effective family planning methods, for reasons ranging from lack of access to information or services to lack of support from their partners or communities.\(^1\)

Some 68,000 women die of unsafe abortion annually, making it one of the leading causes of maternal mortality (13%). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), every 8 minutes a woman in a developing nation will die of complications arising from an unsafe abortion.\(^2\)

Preparing tomorrow’s health workers to provide women with lifesaving reproductive health care

A woman with access to high-quality reproductive health services has access to opportunity. Without access to quality care, even the most basic reproductive health issues can put women’s lives at risk. There is an urgent need to increase the number of skilled health professionals providing that quality care to women whenever and wherever they need it.

The Center for International Reproductive Health Training works with medical schools to provide future doctors, nurses and midwives with comprehensive reproductive health care education and experience. Students receive pre-service training in all aspects of reproductive health, including contraception, safe pregnancy termination and birth spacing. As more providers are trained to offer these services, more women can find treatment, care and support they need.

The CIRHT Approach:
Integrated Training for Improved Care

CIRHT integrates training on comprehensive reproductive health care instruction and hands-on clinical rotations into the standard medical school curriculum. To educate the community and address stigma, each partner medical school also collaborates with regional leaders to build a supportive environment for these health professionals. This approach positions graduates to serve clients effectively and compassionately from the start of their careers.

Developing Faculty Skills and Leadership

It is important to stay abreast of news, research, and instructional developments affecting reproductive health and family planning. CIRHT supports faculty with access to scholarly journals, regular interactive seminars, mentorship and targeted training.

Supporting Local Research to Improve Evidence-based Practice

Faculty and students are encouraged and mentored on research projects that are relevant to their communities and focused on how to improve clinical care, counseling, and follow-up: to better understand and serve their patients.

\(^1\) UNFPA  
\(^2\) US NIH
Building a Community of Support

Beyond medical training, doctors, nurses and midwives learn how to promote the benefits of comprehensive reproductive health care and help families understand the services that are available. CIRHT’s Fellowship program will offer advanced training in reproductive health research, policy and practice, preparing graduates with the knowledge and skills to effectively champion the needs of women.

Our Training Strategy

To increase the number of health professionals providing quality, comprehensive reproductive health care, CIRHT is working to:

1. Build faculty capacity on clinical training in reproductive health services, medical and surgical pregnancy termination, as well as teaching and research skills.

2. Improve the capacity of partner medical schools with the physical infrastructure, equipment and instruction models needed to deliver quality training.

3. Implement and expand integrated pre-service training for medical students, interns and residents.

4. Monitor and evaluate training to ensure that partner schools adhere to the curriculum’s standards, while enabling CIRHT to share lessons learned.

Training Future Health Professionals: Ethiopia

The Center has partnered with ten medical schools across the country.

“Quality reproductive health care not only saves lives, it also empowers women and girls. Enabling them to make informed decisions about if and when to have children, and how many to have, opens up possibilities for what they and their families can achieve.”

– Lia Tadesse, MD, MHA, Program Director, the Center for International Reproductive Health Training

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