

Why Does Global Health Matter to Connecticut?



Even though “global health” refers to health issues and diseases that affect developing countries, it matters to Connecticut as well. It matters to Connecticut’s economy and the health of its workers and residents.

We have global ties...

- **through trade and commerce.**

In 2012, Connecticut exports reached \$16 billion worth of goods to 222 countries. Some of these countries include Brazil, India, Egypt, and Mexico.

- **through foreign investment.**

In 2010, foreign-controlled companies employed 101,200 Connecticut workers. Major sources of foreign investment in Connecticut in 2010 included the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Germany, and France.

Foreign investment in Connecticut was responsible for 7.3 percent of the state's total private-industry employment in 2010.

- **through its colleges and universities.**

In the 2011-2012 school year, 283 students from abroad studied in Connecticut, according to the CSIET. The students and their families contributed \$236,267,000 to the Connecticut economy.

Global Ties Benefit Connecticut

The Nutmeg’s global ties benefit the state’s economy, providing billions of dollars in revenue and thousands of jobs. For example, one in four manufacturing workers here depends on international exports for his or her job.

These Ties can be Jeopardized by Global Health Crises

Connecticut's global ties link the state's economic health to the health and economic growth of other countries. When these countries have crises and threaten their stability, Connecticut is challenged as well.

What's the Link between Health and Wealth?

Epidemics and other crises affect entire communities to work together and limit the potential for growth. The following examples illustrate the link between global health and economic development:

- **Malaria** costs Africa \$12 billion in lost economic output every year. It is estimated that without malaria, the economic output of many African countries, some of which are important trade partners for Connecticut businesses, would be 30 percent greater than it is today. Connecticut exports \$204 million worth of goods to Africa every year.
- UNAIDS estimates that the **HIV** rate in China increases by 20-30 percent annually. China is a valuable trading partner for Connecticut, purchasing nearly \$565 million worth of Connecticut exports in 2007 alone.



Research to Improve Global Health Benefits Connecticut

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is a world leader in biomedical research that improves health in the United States and around the world. Most of the research that is funded by NIH is conducted on university campuses across the country. NIH awards many grants to Connecticut universities, which in turn bring money and jobs to the state. In 2012, Connecticut received approximately \$473 million in research grants and contracts from NIH. Some of these grants fund research that will improve global health. In 2012, Connecticut received funding from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, National Science Foundation and Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality for a total of \$127 million.

Connecticut for Global Health

Uganda's Makerere College of Health Sciences may be thousands of miles from Western Connecticut Health Network (WCHN), yet the powerful lessons medical students experience while abroad raise the quality of care they bring to their practice of medicine at home.

"We must share the globe. We are all genetically related," said Majid Sadigh, MD, the humanitarian and educator who joined WCHN as director of its new Global Health Education Program in conjunction with the University of Vermont College of Medicine. The global initiative expands WCHN's medical education program internationally into established sites in Russia and Uganda, with plans to soon add new locations, including Cho Ray Hospital in Vietnam and a medical clinic in the Dominican Republic. "Medical students who work abroad come back with a level of skill and compassion that enables Western Connecticut Health Network to advance the quality of care we deliver to our community, both regionally and globally," said Dr. Sadigh, an infectious disease specialist and internist who has spent the last two decades establishing global health programs in resource-starved countries. "We learn as much from our colleagues overseas as they learn from us."

Ramin Ahmadi, MD, chairman of Medical Education and Research at WCHN, said the global health program strengthens the network's standing as a leading teaching and research institution and regional medical center. "Our commitment to medical education and research positively impacts patients because we're able to attract the best and brightest physicians and health care professionals," he said. WCHN includes Danbury Hospital, New Milford Hospital and the Biomedical Research Institute in downtown Danbury, Connecticut.

Dr. Sadigh comes to WCHN with a wealth of experience in global health, having worked in regions plagued by HIV/AIDS, ebola, malaria and cholera. Most recently, Dr. Sadigh taught at the Yale Medical School, where he established exchange programs with Makerere College of Health Sciences in Uganda and Kazan State Medical University in Russia.



In Conclusion

Just 100 years ago, cities like London and New York resembled some of the most disease-ridden cities in today's developing world. From past experience, we can draw on our knowledge and skills to help transform such environments. Some see eliminating poverty — and more specifically improving health — as defending fundamental human rights and bringing fairness and equity to society. Others with a more spiritual outlook rely on their religious beliefs to help guide their thinking.

Further, we are addressing Health and in many cases, Community challenges in Armenia, Kenya, Peru, Thailand and Uganda. In return, US doctors, medical students, faculty and volunteers are benefitting from exceptional, unique opportunities to learn from colleagues across the globe, experience the richness of other cultures, and expand their understanding of global challenges and possibilities.