



GLOBAL HEALTH SERIES
ELCA.org/advocacy



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

MALARIA

Malaria is one of the oldest and deadliest infectious diseases in the world today. While it has been eradicated in many parts of the world, malaria remains endemic in tropical and subtropical areas with high levels of poverty, especially where climatic factors such as humidity, temperature and rainfall make it easier for [anopheles mosquitoes](#) to thrive. People living in poverty and other vulnerable populations are at the greatest risk of dying from malaria.

PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES

Increased efforts to prevent, mitigate and eradicate malaria over the past 20 years have led to significant progress. Since 2000, global malaria mortality rates have decreased by [60%](#). Furthermore, between 2010 and 2018, the malaria incidence rate [declined](#) from 71 to 57 cases per 1,000.

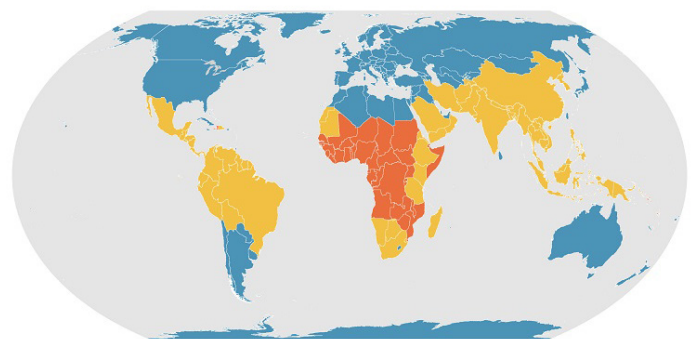
Yet many challenges remain. As the 2019 World Malaria report shows, malaria continues to kill [over 400,000](#) people annually, and hundreds of millions of people are affected each year. Other challenges include resistance to drugs and insecticides as well as [stalled progress](#) in some affected countries, challenges that complicate efforts to eradicate the disease.

Consider these statistics:

- [Every two minutes](#), a child dies from malaria.
- In 2018, [children](#) under age 5 accounted for 67% of all malaria mortality.
- Since 2010, more than [200 million cases](#) of malaria have been reported every year.
- Of all malaria cases and malaria-related deaths, [93-94%](#) occur in sub-Saharan Africa.

ELCA RESPONSE

When the ELCA heard from our companion churches and ministry partners about the devastation malaria caused, the church took action by launching a malaria campaign. Funds raised through the ELCA Malaria Campaign have supported malaria projects implemented by companion churches and other partners in Africa and Southeast Asia, including in Bangladesh, Central African Republic, India, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Namibia, Senegal, South Sudan, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. The ELCA Malaria Campaign [reached](#) its fundraising goal of \$15 million when it concluded in 2015, making significant impact in education, mosquito nets, testing and treatment, distributing preventative medication and economically empowering households. In addition to supporting companions and partners in their work to reduce the burden of



■ Malaria transmission is not known to occur
■ Malaria transmission occurs in some places
■ Malaria transmission occurs throughout

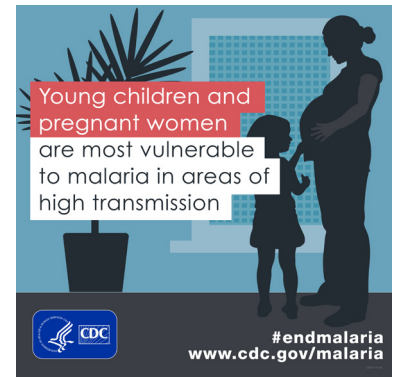
www.edc.gov/malaria/about/distribution.html

MALARIA

malaria, the ELCA continues to advocate for robust and sustainable bilateral and multilateral malaria programs, including ensuring that Congress appropriates needed funds every year.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

The U.S. government has been involved in the global fight against malaria since the 1950s as part of its development and relief work, led by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In 2005, President George W. Bush launched the [U.S. President's Malaria Initiative](#) (PMI) to streamline U.S. bilateral malaria efforts, with the goal of reducing by half the malaria mortality rate in heavily impacted countries. The United States is also involved through the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, a public-private organization that provides [65%](#) of all international funding for malaria control and research programs.



The international community has set the [goal of eliminating malaria by 2030](#) as part of the Sustainable Development agenda. This will require greater coordination, political will and financial commitment from governments and nongovernmental stakeholders. As the largest financial donor to malaria programs and the largest contributor of technical expertise, the United States plays a major role in achieving this goal. The ELCA recognizes that both governments and nongovernmental organizations have roles to play in public health. The ELCA social statement [Caring for Health: Our Shared Endeavor](#) states that “nations and international organizations must cooperate in public health efforts.” In global challenges, “the United States government and non-governmental organizations have responsibility to work with others in such areas as securing clean water and sanitation, overcoming hunger and malnutrition, preventing and combating infectious diseases, responding to disasters, and providing health services for women, men, and children who live in poverty” (p. 14).

DETERMINATION

There are growing concerns that the U.S. government will pull back its support for malaria programs rather than sustain or expand current efforts. Also, the coronavirus outbreak has the potential to disrupt malaria programs on the ground, including by limiting the availability of critical drugs. As Lutherans, we must continue to raise our voices through advocacy to ensure sustainability of global malaria programs.

ORIGINALLY POSTED: May 2020

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[The History of Malaria, an Ancient Disease](#) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, last reviewed 11/14/18)

[How the U.S. Stopped Malaria, One Cartoon at a Time](#) (National Public Radio, 12/19/12)

[U.S. President's Malaria Initiative: 13th Annual Report to Congress](#) (USAID, May 2019)

[A Framework for Malaria Elimination](#) (World Health Organization, March 2017)