CDC Engagement with the Global Fund: Current Approaches and opportunities for Enhanced Collaboration

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Abstract
The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is one of the U.S. government’s (USG) largest public health agencies and leading implementers of global health programs. Primarily a domestic agency, CDC has expanded its global health work dramatically over the last 15 years via the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the President’s Malaria Initiative (PMI), and global tuberculosis control efforts, as well as through the Global Health Security Agenda and international Ebola response. To maximize the use of these resources and leverage funding from other partners, CDC has sought to increase collaboration with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria (GF). Created in 2002, GF is a multilateral partnership that raises money from governments, the private sector, and civil society to combat these three major infectious diseases. Together, the USG (including CDC) and GF control 27% of all global health funds, over $9 billion annually, and jointly work in 63 countries. Given the significant funding being invested by both entities, maximizing programmatic and financial synergy is imperative for sustaining the public health gains supported by these organizations. However, little is currently understood about how CDC staff engage with GF and opportunities for improvement.

The primary, overarching research question of this study was how can CDC improve collaboration with GF at headquarters and country levels in order to increase the impact of health investments by both entities. This analysis utilized both quantitative and qualitative data collected from CDC staff in two stages to broadly assess current CDC engagement with GF at various levels. The study found that there is a high degree of interest among CDC staff in GF and that engagement with GF is considered very important to their work, but that they were not necessarily maximally effective in their collaboration. CDC staff face multiple challenges regarding GF, including low levels of self-reported knowledge, lack of training, unclear support and communication systems, and deficiency in dedicated staff or time for engagement. There is a desire for more strategic direction, training, and prioritization of GF collaboration, particularly among country-based staff.

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