**Florida International University and HTHH**

**Global Health Forum**

**April 9, 2015**

**10:30am-12:00pm**

**10:00am-10:05am**

**Welcome**

**Dr. Mark Rosenberg, President FIU**

**10:05am-10:25am**

**Keynote Address: William H. Frist**, MD, Former U.S. Senate Majority Leader, Founder and Chairman of the Board of Hope Through Healing Hands

I.

* Thank you, Mark, and good morning! Thank you for welcoming us here today, and thank you for joining us at this Global Health Forum. While Mark has been a leading figure in Florida for decades, I noted in his bio that he spent some time earlier in his career teaching at Vanderbilt, and we would love to welcome you back to Nashville in the future!
* We are so excited to be here with you in Miami! FIU and its Latin America and Caribbean Center are recognized as one of the leading institutions in the country when it comes to western hemisphere studies. Through its medical school, law school and Department of Politics and International Relations, FIU possesses a remarkable cross-disciplinary team of policy and research leaders, and we will be fortunate to hear from many of them today as we get into the panel sessions.
* Miami really is a true bridge to the Caribbean, Central America, and South America. Not only is the city a true port of commerce and culture, but your community, unlike maybe anywhere else in America, has a ***real pulse*** on the current interests and pressing issues with those countries directly south of our border.
* And today, among those issues, we are here to discuss Global Health, with a particular interest in the health investments and healthcare access for the people of Haiti and Latin America.
* We also have a panel dedicated to the important work of global health policy and advocacy.
* I think it’s important to see the link here for the Miami community. As a formal legislator, I can testify to the importance of robust dialogue around shaping policy as well as advocacy with members of Congress to sustain interest and protect funding in the U.S. Budget for global health. The two go hand in hand: 1) knowledge about global health issues 2) activism and advocacy – if we are to continue the work of “soft power” or “smart power” through foreign assistance.
* Hope Through Healing Hands is a humanitarian organization, and we believe in charity and philanthropy and serving vulnerable populations worldwide because, simply, it is the right thing to do; a moral thing to do. But we also know that elevating global health issues among elected officials with advocacy is about **protecting national security** – you don’t go to war with someone who has saved the life of your child; **enhancing foreign relations** with health diplomacy; and addressing **worldwide public health issues**. It is in our ultimate best interest to invest in global health and development for a better, safer world for us all.
* Recently, the Kaiser Family Foundation polled the American public once again to gauge their knowledge and understanding about foreign assistance. Over half our population, over 50%, thought that the U.S. Budget committed 25% to foreign assistance. The reality? We provide less than 1% for global health and development. A vast misconception.
* What *is* exciting is that this fraction of 1% of the U.S. budget affects thousands, even millions, of lives. In 2002, less than 50,000 people had access to anti-retroviral medication in Africa. Today, over 14 million people worldwide are receiving life-saving drugs thanks to PEPFAR and the Global Fund. Thanks to you, the American taxpayer and your dollars at work.
* There may not be a better investment around, pennies to the dollar, in terms of saving lives, building infrastructure, and ultimately addressing economic sustainability in developing nations around the world.

II.

* In this first panel, we are going to discuss an issue very important to me and to Hope Through Healing Hands: maternal, newborn, and child health. Why these issues? Why not water or HIV/AIDS or education?
* For the last 7 years or so, I’ve had the privilege to sit on the Board of Trustees for *Save the Children*. I served as the Co-Chair of their Newborn and Child Survival Campaign. In that capacity, we have been championing the issues of maternal, newborn, and child health now as maybe the next big critical issue for global health, for years.
* With this background, we were excited to work with Melinda Gates and others to lead on these often overlooked issues of *healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies* as a critical nexus of global health issues.
* We know that if we can address healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies in a systemic and sustainable way, we can also achieve many other global health goals. These include combatting extreme poverty, promoting gender equality, keeping children in schools, keeping young women in schools to graduate secondary or even college level education, improving maternal and child health, and prevention of transmission of HIV from mother to child.
* For about 18 months, Hope Through Healing Hands has been leading the *Faith-Based Coalition for Healthy Mothers and Children Worldwide* with support from the Gates Foundation.
* This coalition is a growing group of people of faith who are artists, authors, athletes, and academics. Pastors, church leaders, and nonprofit leaders have all come together to lend their voices to promote awareness and advocacy for maternal, newborn, and child health with a special emphasis on healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies.
* When we talk about healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies (or HTSP), we are talking about access to voluntary family planning, put simply.
* We know that this is a moral issue, and it has to be a bi-partisan issue. The faith communities are at the helm of missions, care, and concern for vulnerable populations. They really must be a vital part of this conversation and at the helm of this campaign for it to be successful.
* To unpack this message, to change the rhetoric, and to rethink the importance of family planning or healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies, we knew we needed strong messaging with voices from across the spectrum –from more conservative to more progressive—united on this issue. But how to do that?
* This is what *The Mother & Child Project: Raising Our Voices for Health and Hope* is all about. We asked 47 authors to contribute their voice for awareness and advocacy for healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies. This compendium of essays and articles range from personal stories and poetry from artists to weightier policy pieces from academics. We have political op-eds and essays that get at the intersection of HTSP and modern day slavery, orphanhood, and gender inequities.
* And, from leaders in the faith-based community, there is a whole section dedicated to why people of faith should care about these issues.
* Most importantly, this book reveals the stories from the women themselves of how healthy timing and spacing has deeply influenced, or perhaps saved, their lives and the lives of their children. Women from Kenya, India, Burundi, Ethiopia, and other developing nations share their stories for the first time.
* These stories bring faces to the statistics.
* Over 289,00 women in developing nations – Africa, Asia, and Latin America alike -- die from preventable complications during pregnancy and childbirth. Sadly over 80 percent of these deaths are preventable. Skilled care during labor, delivery and up to 48 hours postpartum makes a lifesaving difference.
* When girls are married in their early teen years and immediately pressured to become pregnant, there are serious health risks to both mother and any child she bears at such a young age. And when mothers in nations with poor nutrition and health systems become pregnant too soon (less than 2.5 years) after their previous birth, the health impact on both mother and child can be devastating.
* *The Mother & Child Project* seeks to spread the word, educating grasstops and grassroots alike on healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies.
* We are excited to announce its launch last week, and we have copies in the back at the registration area!

III.

* This is going to be an exciting day!
* The Haitian Prime Minister of Health, Dr. Florence Dupeval Guillaume is with us today, and over the lunch hour, she and I will be discussing health priorities in Haiti as Haiti continues to rebuild in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake of 2010. I hope you will stay to join us for that robust discussion.
* And, now I would like to invite Tom Walsh to the stage as the moderator for our first panel, Global Leadership: Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health.
* Tom Walsh is the Senior Program Officer of Global Policy and Advocacy and Global Health at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in Washington, D.C.
* And we’ve been privileged to work with him and travel with him for about 18 months now discussing these critical issues of global health.
* Thank you again. Special thanks to all the faculty and staff at FIU to make this day possible. Lets look forward to informative and impactful sessions ahead.