

# First Candle: We Oppose Withdrawal from the WHO

Alison Jacobson



Saving babies. Supporting families.

**First Candle's efforts to support families during their most difficult times and provide new answers to help other families avoid the tragedy of the loss of their baby are without parallel.**

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If the withdrawal goes through, the US will no longer have access to the global health data reported by the WHO, nor will it benefit from collaboration among its 193 other member countries, and the US's voice in global health policy will be diminished.

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The WHO has a long record of advancing evidence-based maternal and infant health guidelines, including prenatal care, birthing practices, breastfeeding, and maternal mortality. Between 2000 and 2020, the WHO reported that the maternal mortality ratio per 100,000 live births [dropped by roughly 34%](#) worldwide, but in 2020, nearly 800 women died each day from preventable pregnancy and childbirth-related causes, a too-high statistic that the WHO continues to tackle.

Through our work to end deaths from SIDS and SUID, we see the value of holistic approaches – healthy mothers increase the chances for healthy babies, and the environments families live in affect their health. The WHO plays a role in coordinating global responses to health emergencies such as pandemics, which directly affect maternal and infant health systems. Without the support of the WHO, US efforts could conceivably lack full coordination or early warnings.

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**Reference:**

1. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/maternal-mortality>

**Disclosure:** *The author is the Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer of First Candle, a Connecticut-based not-for-profit 501c (3) corporation.*

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