The Manta Health Center is Working as a Team to Offer Quality Zika Pre-natal Care

“Zika is a viral disease that can also be transmitted via sexual contact, with pregnant women being at risk of contracting the disease from their partners during their entire pregnancy. The Pre-natal Care Council, composed of health professionals, emphasizes the use of barrier methods (male and female condoms) during sexual activity to prevent congenital anomalies in the newborn” Dr. Mariana Suárez

The USAID ASSIST-Zika Project has implemented operational activities in conjunction with the Ministry of Public Health of Ecuador (MSP) since June 2018. Upon inception of the project’s intervention to improve the quality of pre-natal care, they noticed challenges in procedural compliance such as the lack of a prescription registry and condom distribution, insufficient counseling regarding preventive Zika transmission measures and the constant shortage of condoms available at the health center.

After implementation of quality improvement strategies, there were significant improvements in pre-natal care such as timely counseling regarding condom use during pregnancy, review of the registration sheet containing the 16 quality standards and the prescribing of condoms along with iron and folic acid supplements and ensuring that the couple has received them. The team also insisted on the need for consistent condom availability at the health center, which was aided by a donation from ASSIST in May 2019.

Another effective strategy to facilitate access to pre-natal care to pregnant women of reproductive age and their partners, was to offer a presentation on Zika prevention measures when in a hospital waiting room, breastfeeding room and their own homes with the help of home visits performed by the primary care team.

Dr. Mariana Suárez Benitez is the leader of the continuous quality improvement team of the Pre-natal Care Collaborative at Manta Health Center, one of the centers supported by USAID’s

May 2019

This success story was authored by Dr. Luis Vega from the ASSIST Ecuador technical team of University Research Co., LLC (URC) and produced by the USAID Applying Science to Strengthen and Improve Systems (ASSIST) Project, funded by the American people through USAID’s Bureau for Global Health, Office of Health Systems. The project is managed by URC under the terms of Cooperative Agreement Number AID-OAA-A-12-00101. URC’s global partners for ASSIST Zika activities include: American Academy of Pediatrics; FHI 360; Institute for Healthcare Improvement; and WI-HER, LLC. For more information on the work of the USAID ASSIST Project, please visit www.usaidassist.org or write assist-info@urc-chs.com.
ASSIST Zika Project. Manta Health Center is a primary care establishment, with an assigned population of 57,788 inhabitants. The health unit has seven Family and General practice offices, an Obstetrics office, an emergency room containing 4 observation beds, clinical laboratory, sonogram, pharmacy and a childbirth and recuperation unit, along with 4 post-delivery beds that see an estimated 20 to 40 births per month.

Dr. Mariana’s extensive academic background, along with her on the job experience, is reflected in the work she performs alongside the improvement team, which is characterized by her great awareness, commitment and empowerment of pre-natal care procedures.

The doctor offers outpatient care services at Manta Health Center, is in charge of Obstetric and Neonatal Essential Care (CONE) policy compliance, oversees the continuous monitoring of clinical history, the implementation of improved health cycles—aided by the team—and guarantees the correct execution of out-patient pre-natal care guidelines and policies, while also offering consultation services regarding how to prevent transmission of the Zika virus.

The positive results obtained by the improvement of pre-natal care and thorough Zika counseling at Manta Health Center are a reflection of each improvement team member’s thorough participation. The team consists of family physicians, general medicine physicians, obstetricians, registered nurses, dentists, medical students, nursing residents, admissions, statistics and pharmaceutical personnel. The members have been willing to collaborate and have demonstrated their commitment to quality health care. The team credits the technical assistance offered by the ASSIST-Zika Project as being a valuable asset to Manta Health Center.

“Working as a team produces positive results and that is precisely what we are; a health care team for community wellness who strive to work efficiently, warmly, while offering quality health care. This has enabled us to reach our goals and take proper corrective measures to meet expectations.” Dr. Mariana Suarez