



Our Baby Box Program

Here's the challenge!



In Chhattisgarh out of every 1,000 babies born, 55 will die before their first birthday. In the US, that number is just 6. At CHM one in ten new mothers who delivers a baby at CHM leaves the hospital without a baby. Even though the hospital provides excellent medical care, the vast majority of mothers who come to CHM have 1) received no prenatal care, and 2) already have labored at home for hours, may have received care from both the village quack and/or the government hospital in Mungeli which does not perform caesarean sections. When they finally make the decision to come to our hospital, it may already be too late for both mother and child. This coupled with high anemia and a poor diet, leads to low birth weight babies, and it is all too easy to understand why so many babies die unnecessarily.

We had an idea. Actually the Finns had a great idea, and we're borrowing it and making it our own. Back in 1938, Finland was a very poor country and had a very high infant mortality rate, much like India today. The Finns decided that if more women received prenatal care and delivered their babies in a hospital, the mortality rate would decrease—and it did, dramatically. So, every woman who had a prenatal visit by her fourth month of pregnancy would receive a baby box.

Read more about the Finnish system here <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-22751415>

We believe that the 'baby box' would be an excellent incentive for mothers to complete four prenatal visits.

Where do Indian babies sleep? Although many Finnish babies now sleep in beds, years ago, often a baby's first cradle was the box the mother received for seeking good prenatal care. The World Health Organization recognizes that the ancient practice of babies sleeping with their mothers, still practiced in rural India, creates a risk of suffocation and can contribute to a higher infant mortality rate. Our baby boxes will provide many Indian families with their first ever designated "baby bed."



What's in our box? Our baby boxes will contain many "luxury" items that the average rural Chhattisgarhi family cannot afford, like diapers, blankets, sleepers, baby bath and shampoo. Unlike the Finnish box which is constructed of cardboard so it can be recycled, we plan for our box to be made of sturdy rubberized plastic so that it will survive the monsoons and also can be reused. To foster community participation, the blankets, diapers, sheets, and other materials in the box are being sourced locally.

How much will a box cost? CHM estimates that the cost of each box will be somewhere around \$35. This cost includes not only the cost of the box and its contents, but also the indirect costs involved with tracking the moms and the babies.

How will we reach the moms? As many of you know, since the School of Nursing opened, our senior nursing staff, doctors, and nursing students have made visits to local villages to provide health education and training. In May 2016, we plan to have our new mobile examination bus that will enable the hospital staff to conduct prenatal exams and lab tests in the villages. Our outreach now is limited to the distance the staff can travel on the Rambo school buses. Taking the clinic to the moms will give them more opportunities to complete four prenatal visits and be entitled to a baby box.



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