



SUCCESS STORY

For Pregnant Women, Antenatal Care is Crucial

Outreach efforts connect internally displaced working mother with her first antenatal visit since June



Photo Credit: April Carman

Gulchihra, right, with 15-year-old daughter Zilola. Thanks to USAID's Medical Relief Program, Gulchihra had access to antenatal care and supplies.

"I wanted to go to [antenatal] care, but living in a new place, I didn't know where to go or who to trust."

Telling Our Story

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Thirty five-year-old Gulchihra has three children and is pregnant with her fourth. She cares for her 80-year-old mother-in-law and, despite being 7 months pregnant, works in the fields of a nearby farm to help provide for her family. Her husband has been out of work for several months and Gulchihra's family relies on her hard work to survive. Since July, the family of six has lived in a two-room dormitory while rebuilding their home after the June 2010 violence and fires in south Kyrgyzstan destroyed their home and personal belongings. This challenging situation left little time or resources for this expectant mother to take care of herself.

Gulchihra's temporary home is in a different area of Osh city, far from the primary health clinic Gulchihra usually attends in Cheremushky. For the first five months of her pregnancy, Gulchihra - weighed down by fear, financial constraints, work, and ongoing instability around the city - did not have the money, time, or courage to make the trip across town for antenatal care. The one time she visited a clinic near her temporary home, she was charged fees she could not afford. Discouraged, Gulchihra did not go back.

Then Gulchihra met CitiHope reproductive health outreach workers funded under the USAID Medical Relief Program for Internally Displaced Persons in Osh. The outreach workers explained the maternal-child health services supported by the Medical Relief Program, and encouraged Gulchihra to obtain free antenatal care (ANC) at the closest participating facility - which happened to be her usual clinic in Cheremushky. Gulchihra was hesitant, but an outreach worker continued to encourage her to seek care, providing her with a first aid kit for newborns and mothers and a set of clothing for the newborn. After kind attention and reassurances from the health outreach worker, Gulchihra went to the clinic and initiated ANC. In her fifth month of pregnancy, Gulchihra finally received quality services free of charge.

Gulchihra says if it wasn't for USAID and CitiHope's health outreach efforts and the encouragement of the outreach workers, she would have had to borrow money from her parents to pay for antenatal care services at an unfamiliar clinic. Gulchihra has since received monthly checkups and is expecting to deliver in January.