



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Worldwide Fistula Fund Launches Program Partners Network to Strengthen Global Fistula Care Empowering Leaders, Expanding Hope

Schaumburg, IL — August 13, 2025 — The Worldwide Fistula Fund (WFF) is proud to announce the launch of its newest initiative, the **Program Partners Network**, a collaborative platform designed to unite and empower global leaders in the fight to end obstetric fistula and other devastating childbirth injuries.

Rooted in the belief that lasting change is driven by local leadership, the Program Partners Network fosters a dynamic community of in-country experts dedicated to holistic fistula care. Through regular knowledge exchange, shared innovations, and peer-driven capacity building, this initiative will enhance every stage of care—from outreach and surgery to rehabilitation and advocacy. Current Partners include leaders from Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Niger, and Uganda who collectively support hundreds of women every year.



“Our partners are at the heart of this mission,” said Theresa Spitznagle, Board Chair of the Worldwide Fistula Fund. “The Program Partners Network is more than collaboration—it’s about solidarity. By learning from one another and growing together, we’re building a stronger, more resilient movement to restore dignity and health to women affected by fistula.”

Dr. Holly E. Richter, PhD, MD, FACOG, FACS, Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology and Associate Director of Gynecologic Research at the Center for Women’s Reproductive Health, University of Alabama at Birmingham, Program Committee Chair and Secretary of the WFF Board of Directors, added: “*The*

*Program Partners Network represents a vital step forward in advancing evidence-based, locally driven solutions for obstetric fistula. As a surgeon and researcher, I deeply value the opportunity to collaborate with in-country experts whose insights and innovations are essential to improving maternal health outcomes. This initiative strengthens our collective ability to generate meaningful data, share best practices, expand our outreach and ultimately, transform care for women affected by childbirth injuries.*”

The Program Partners Network is a professional alliance and a way to accelerate progress toward a fistula-free future. By leveraging the collective expertise of its programming, in country partners, WFF is reinforcing its commitment to sustainable, community-led change.

To learn more about the Program Partners Network and the Worldwide Fistula Fund’s mission, visit [worldwidefistulafund.org](http://worldwidefistulafund.org).

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