

Proposed cuts to US Malaria Initiative could mean millions more malaria cases

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Credit: CDC

Cutting the budget of the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) by 44%, as the U.S. Congress has proposed, would lead to an estimated 67 million additional cases of malaria over the next four years, according to a mathematical model published this week in *PLOS Medicine* by Peter Winskill of Imperial College London, UK, and colleagues.

The PMI, established in 2005 and funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID), has provided ongoing support to [malaria](#) control programs in 19 African countries and is the largest bilateral funder of [malaria prevention](#) and treatment. In May 2017, Congress published a budget justification document which included a 44% proposed reduction to PMI funding for 2018. In the new study, the researchers inputted data on PMI funding and epidemiology into an established model of *Plasmodium falciparum* malaria to project the impact of reductions in funding.

If funding is maintained, PMI-funded interventions are estimated to avert 162 million more cases (95% CrI: 116 million, 194 million) of malaria and save 692,589 (95% CrI: 392,694, 955,653) lives between 2017 and 2020 compared to no PMI support. If a 44% reduction in funding occurs, the model revealed that this loss of direct aid could result in an additional 67 million (95% CrI: 49 million, 82 million) cases of malaria and 290,649 deaths (95% CrI: 167,208, 395,263) between 2017 and 2020 compared to maintaining current levels of funding.

"Our results provide a conservative estimate of the overall impact of PMI funding as we do not capture the impact of all PMI-associated activities," the authors say. "PMI's ongoing support... in counties of high burden or strategic importance is vital in order to avoid a rapid erosion of the progress made in the last 15 years on the road towards [malaria eradication](#)."

More information: Winskill P, Slater HC, Griffin JT, Ghani AC, Walker PGT (2017) The US President's Malaria Initiative, *Plasmodium falciparum* transmission and mortality: A modelling study. *PLoS Med* 14(11): e1002448. doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1002448

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