Why Does Global Health Matter to Utah?

Probably for more reasons than you think. Even though the term "global health" refers to diseases and health issues that disproportionately affect developing countries, global health matters to Utah. It matters to the state's economy and to the health of its residents.

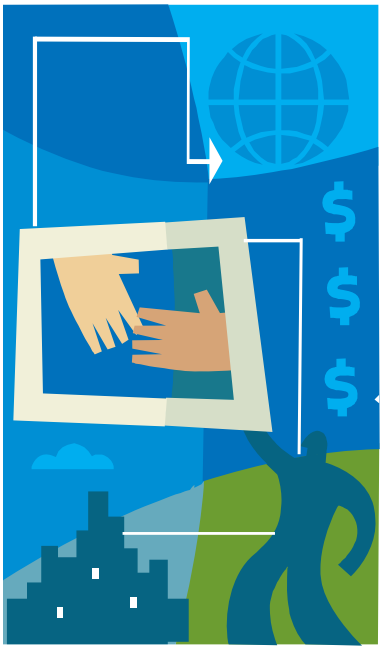
Utah has global ties . . .

- ### . . . through trade and commerce.

  In 2007, Utah exported $7.8 billion worth of goods to 184 foreign destinations. Utah's global exports increased by 90 percent, which is well above the 2007 national growth rate of 61 percent. Some of Utah's trade partners are developing countries in Asia, Africa, and South America.

- ### . . . through foreign investment.

  Utah benefits from foreign investment and the creation of "insourced" jobs—employment by companies that are based outside the United States. In 2006, about 34,600 Utahns worked for foreign-owned companies, which invest in Utah's economy as they expand their operations in the Beehive State.



- ### . . . through its colleges and universities.

  In the 2006-2007 academic year, 6,122 foreign students studied at Utah universities. International students and their families contributed $101 million to the state's economy.

Global Ties Benefit Utah

Utah's global ties benefit the state's economy, providing billions of dollars in revenue and thousands of jobs. For example, one in seven manufacturing workers in Utah depends on international exports for his or her job.

These Ties Can Be Jeopardized by Global Health Crises

Utah's global ties link the state's economic health to the health and economic growth of other countries and regions. When health care crises in other countries threaten economic and political stability, they can end up affecting Utah as well.

What's the Link between Health and Wealth?

Epidemics and other health crises affect the ability of entire communities to work and limit the potential for economies to develop. The following examples illustrate the link between global health and economic development:

- Malaria costs Africa $12 billion in lost economic output every year. It is estimated that without malaria, the economic output of some African countries, some of which are important trade partners for Utah businesses, would be 30 percent greater than it is today. Utah exports $39 million worth of goods to Africa every year.
- UNAIDS estimates that the HIV rate in China is rising by 20-30 percent every year. China is a valuable trading partner for Utah, purchasing nearly $387 million worth of Utah exports in 2007 alone.

Research to Improve Global Health Benefits Utah

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is a world leader in biomedical research that improves health in the United States and around the world. Most of the research that is funded by NIH is conducted on university campuses across the country. NIH awards many grants to Utah universities, which in turn bring money and jobs to Utah. In 2007, Utah received approximately $153 million in research grants and contracts from NIH, which helped create and support 3,003 new jobs. Some of these grants are for research that will improve global health. For example, a University of Utah researcher, Wesley Sundquist, Ph.D., received a five-year, $19.2 million grant to establish an HIV research center to study HIV/AIDS, a disease that disproportionately affects low-income countries. Grants from NIH bring jobs and higher wages to Utah at the same time that they help the world to make progress in global health.

Utah-India Collaboration for Global Health

Today, many state economies have a stake in global health. Governor Jon Huntsman Jr. recognizes the long-term economic benefits of building relationships with developing countries such as India, China, and Mexico. In the fall of 2007, Gov. Huntsman and a delegation of Utah higher education and high-tech company officials visited India to initiate several international collaborations—for example, between the University of Utah and four Indian companies. Jack Brittain, Vice President of Technology Venture Development at the University of Utah, facilitated the partnerships between the university and the Indian companies. These companies include Pregna International (located in Mumbai), which is a world leader in contraceptive manufacturing. Through this partnership, Pregna will commercialize biotech innovations and products that can be used to fight diseases such as HIV/AIDS, which is taking a particularly devastating toll in developing nations.

Globally, more than 33 million individuals are living with HIV/AIDS, including 2 million people in India and 1.2 million people in the United States. Technologies such as anti-HIV contraceptives and microbicides are being developed by researchers at the University of Utah, which often receives funding from NIH, and will be manufactured and marketed in India as well as other parts of the world.

As an international leader in research, the University of Utah continues to contribute to the state's economy through the production and marketing of their research and technologies. Gov. Huntsman says, "Working collaboratively with India through these four international partnerships, the University of Utah will open up opportunities for existing businesses and aid in the start-up of new companies which will create meaningful jobs through a strong humanitarian focus." Jack Brittain adds that "These Indian companies are unique partners for the University of Utah. Their leaders are innovative and eager to bring new medical technologies to their community. Partnering with Indian companies will allow the University to benefit from their expertise and willingness to engage in collaborative research and development. Through this alliance we will be able to accelerate commercialization of University technologies and provide economic benefits to both the United States and India."

Conclusion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are taking the lead in the research and development of drugs and vaccines aimed at improving global health and lessening the impact of deadly diseases such as HIV/AIDS, TB, and malaria.

To find out how we can accelerate the search for better medical technologies, please visit www.familiesusa.org/issues/global-health.

Sources available upon request from Families USA.

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