A Twinned Approach:
Combining Helping Mothers Survive and Helping Babies Survive

Helping Mothers Survive (HMS) and Helping Babies Survive (HBS) learning modules aim to increase essential obstetric and newborn care skills among midwives, nurses, doctors, and others who provide care during labor and birth. HMS and HBS modules consist of a concise, single to several day facility-based trainings, followed by short, frequent practice sessions to reinforce skills. Often in rural settings, the same provider cares for a woman and her newborn. Therefore, by combining the two programs, health care providers are best able to provide high-quality, lifesaving care to both women and newborns at this most critical time. We will use HMS Bleeding after Birth (BAB) and HBS Helping Babies Breathe (HBB) as an example of the twinned approach in this briefer.

Best Practices

Master Trainer Workshop: When planning for a combined HMS/HBS program, for efficiency you can train national- or regional-level Master Trainers in BAB and HBB during the same workshop. Begin with the one-day HMS and HBB Champion (provider) courses, followed by the one-day training on facilitation support, and then mentored training session. Mentored trainings can occur during the workshop or at the district/regional level.

HMS/HBS Training: The literature on effective educational techniques suggests that learning should be consolidated before moving on to a new topic to increase learning and retention of knowledge. Therefore, Master Trainers should first train trainers in HMS BAB including facility-based mentorship. Once that phase is complete, Master Trainers train trainers in HBS HBB including facility-based mentorship. It is important to reiterate, whenever possible, Master Trainers should provide mentoring to the HMS/HBS trainers at a health facility because they are responsible for training providers, not trainers.

Champion/Provider Course: Providers and advocates only receive the Champion course. These courses deliver the clinical content for a specific maternal or newborn complication and provide opportunities for feedback and repeated practice. The one-day BAB and HBB courses are best delivered within two months of each other, beginning with the Champion course and followed by 6-8 weeks of ongoing, structured practice. Providers then receive the HBB providers’ course, followed by HBB-specific practice sessions. If your program has sufficient simulators, encourage providers to continue with combined BAB HBB low-dose, high-frequency session plans. Below is a diagram that outlines the process for one training package (BAB) including practice led by Peer Practice Coordinators at the health facility. Once this cycle is complete, providers are trained in the other course (HBB), followed by practice of combined skills.

For more detailed information on facility-level training, please see the HMS Implementation Guide available at helpingmotherssurvive.org.