

**Integrating Zinc into
Diarrhea Management**
e-Conference June 1–2, 2011



Hello, and welcome to the e-Conference on diarrhea management. My name is Susan Mitchell, and I am the director of the USAID-funded Strengthening Health Outcomes for the Private Sector or SHOPS project. This is the third in a series of online conferences that we are organizing to disseminate best practices in working with the private sector to achieve positive health outcomes.

The private health sector in many developing countries is an important source of health care, including for diarrhea treatment. Clients reach out to the private sector for a range of reasons, including convenience or perceived quality. I hope you will take a moment to look at the data on diarrhea treatment practices, which is presented by Dominic Montegu and our Setting the Stage panel. There you will get a sense of the regional trends for diarrhea treatment and the relative role of the private sector.

While SHOPS focuses on localizing the private sector, the conference today will look at a range of program options, from NGO-led to commercial to public sector to integrated public/private partnerships. What we seek to do through this conference is to show what we as a community have learned in introducing zinc as an integral part of diarrhea management and to discuss as a community the ongoing challenges we continue to face so that we can put our collective ideas together to begin to address them.

This conference has been pre-recorded, so you can feel free to peruse the content at your leisure in any order. If you are accessing this welcome during our pre-conference proceedings, you now have the opportunity to listen to the Setting the Stage presentations, hear interviews with zinc program thought leaders, and join conversations in the discussion room. On June 1st, our panels will be available, along with live moderated chats with experts, our resource center, and conference polls. There are networking opportunities through the many discussion boards and chat rooms, as well as a searchable list of conference attendees by geography and interest area. For those with no background in diarrhea management with zinc and ORS, there are a number of helpful tools and publications in our resource center.

At the conclusion of the conference, there will be a summary that synthesizes key themes and highlights gaps identified by the panelists, exhibitors, and participants. The conference site will remain live for an extended period, and then all conference materials will be accessible on the SHOPS website (www.shopsproject.org). Thank you, and I look forward to seeing you online at the conference.