

Dear readers,

It is with great pleasure that I introduce Volume 5, Issue 2 of the Rwanda Public Health Bulletin (RPHB), a dedicated issue focusing on the critical aspects of maternal and child health.

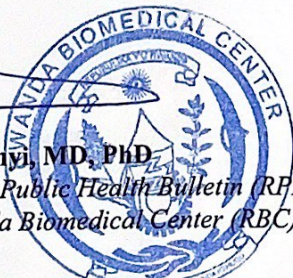
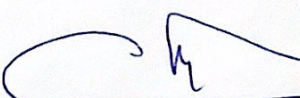
This issue presents a comprehensive evaluation of various facets essential to improving the health and well-being of mothers and children in Rwanda, highlighting both challenges and innovative solutions that our healthcare system could implement. Maternal and child health remains a cornerstone of our national health agenda, and we have made significant strides in enhancing the quality and accessibility of healthcare services. However, there is still much work to be done to ensure that every mother and child in Rwanda can thrive.

This issue explores the current state of Antenatal care (ANC) utilization, which is crucial for monitoring and promoting the health of both the mother and the developing fetus. Identified influencing factors could inform strategies to improve attendance and quality of care. This issue also shows how community health workers (CHWs) influence family planning decisions and highlights areas of improvement since CHWs play an indispensable role in our healthcare system, particularly in promoting family planning and reproductive health services. Strengthening the capacity and support for CHWs is essential for sustaining and promoting family planning and reproductive health services, which also would help combat adolescent pregnancies. Adolescent pregnancy poses serious health risks to young mothers and their infants and can have long-lasting socio-economic consequences. By reading this publication, you will learn the contributing factors to adolescent pregnancy and gain insights into interventions that can help mitigate this challenge. Addressing the root causes of adolescent pregnancy is critical to improving the life prospects of our youth.

Intestinal parasites remain a significant public health issue affecting young children in Rwanda. You will learn from an article on caregivers' knowledge, attitudes, and practices, the importance of educating caregivers on effective prevention measures, and the role of sanitation and hygiene in combating these infections. Empowering caregivers with the right knowledge and practices is key to protecting children from these preventable conditions.

Additionally, this issue features a policy brief on hypertension management using innovations as one of the outcomes of Data to Policy (D2P) Program conducted by the Rwanda Biomedical Centre (RBC) in collaboration of Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Vital Strategies, and Bloomberg Philanthropies. Hypertension is a growing concern in Rwanda, contributing to the burden of non-communicable diseases. This brief explores innovative approaches to managing hypertension and reducing its prevalence and impact on our population.

The current issue of the RPHB underscores our commitment to advancing maternal and child health through evidence-based research, community engagement, and innovative solutions. Therefore, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the contributors, researchers, and health professionals who have shared their valuable insights and findings. Together, we can continue to build a healthier future for all Rwandans.

The seal of the Rwanda Biomedical Center (RBC) is circular. It features a central emblem with a scale of justice, a caduceus, and a book. The text 'RWANDA BIOMEDICAL CENTER' is written around the top inner edge, and 'Rwanda' is written at the bottom. The year '1997' is also visible.

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