



Announcing ACS Newborn Infant Resuscitation Program

In Afghanistan, 165 new infants die for every 1000 births and maternal mortality is about 60 times that of industrialized countries, with an Afghan mother dying every half-hour on average. Most children in Afghanistan die today because of ineffective health care rather than injury or war. To date, Afghanistan has one of the highest maternal, infant, and child mortality rates in the world.

To help fight these tremendous odds, Afghans for Civil Society is launching, in partnership with Ellyn Elizabeth Cavanagh, Ph.D., MN, CPNP, a **Newborn Infant Resuscitation Program** for midwives and mothers in June 2007.

Dr. Cavanagh is a pediatric nurse practitioner with over thirty years of clinical practice caring for vulnerable populations of infants and children. She began her nursing career in 1972, at the emergence of the concept of intensive care units by providing nursing care for critically ill babies and children at University of California at Los Angeles Medical Center. She joined the neonatal intensive care team at University of California at San Francisco in 1974 and learned the broader science of providing advanced respiratory care to premature babies. In 1975, she joined the largest neonatal unit in the United States, Los Angeles County-University of Southern California Medical Center Women's Hospital and shortly after assumed the neonatal educator position on the Robert Wood Johnson Perinatal Regionalization Grant. In the educator capacity, Dr. Cavanagh was responsible for teaching neonatal nursing in Eastern Los Angeles County with one of the United States' highest infant mortality rates. In 1979, she went to Cali, Columbia, South America for a year, to assist Dr. Luis Cabal, with the establishment of a neonatal intensive care unit and curriculum for nurses and physicians. Upon returning to California in the 1980s, she continued as a neonatal educator and served on the Perinatal Advisory Council until her move to Seattle in 1984.

Dr. Cavanagh continued her commitment in promoting neonatal education and the care of critically ill children in the Pacific Northwest at Children's Hospital and Medical Center and in Washington, DC at Georgetown University Children's Medical Center. In 2003, she began an ultimate humanitarian assignment by volunteering in Kabul, Afghanistan at Rabia Balkhi Women's Hospital, where mothers and newborns have the worst mortality rates. She spent a total of 8 months helping the Afghan nurses and physicians establish a newborn service. She continues to work on behalf of the Afghan citizens with plans to contribute to the reconstruction of a maternal child health care system until the infant mortality in that country meets our own. This will be a lifetime of work and require many dedicated individuals.

She received all of her advanced degrees at the University of Washington School of Nursing in Seattle, Washington and is a member of the Psi chapter of Sigma Theta Tau. She currently practices as a full pediatric nurse practitioner in child neurology at Georgetown University in Washington, DC. She is a member of Afghans for Civil Society, a Baltimore-based non-governmental organization promoting health security and peace for Afghan citizens.