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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **INMED Expands Revolutionary Jaundice Kit to Another Region in Peru**

[STERLING, VA, USA: February 28, 2020]: Babies born this year in Trujillo, Peru will get a healthier start in life, thanks to the Bilikit™. It is the second high-jaundice region in Peru where INMED Partnerships for Children/INMED Andes have introduced this ground-breaking trio of low-cost and portable technologies to screen for, diagnose and treat neonatal jaundice in low-resource regions.

Regional Health Department officials, hospital clinicians, community health agents and members of the media gathered today to learn more about INMED's Bilikit™ project and how it will be implemented in La Libertad.

Neonatal jaundice is the most common condition requiring medical treatment in newborns. Occurring in approximately 60% of full-term infants, it is usually self-resolving. However, an estimated 10% of all newborns have jaundice severe enough to require intervention. Left untreated, jaundice can lead to permanent neurological damage such as cerebral palsy—or even death. Approximately 1 million newborns are affected by severe jaundice annually.

In Peru, where INMED is implementing the Bilikit™ project, more than 90% of health facilities lack the equipment and training to adequately diagnose and treat neonatal jaundice, contributing to a rate of jaundice-linked brain damage (kernicterus) up to 20 times higher than in high-income countries.

Funded by a Saving Lives at Birth grant from Grand Challenges Canada, INMED Andes introduced the Bilikit™ last year in Peru's Junín region. Health workers have since screened more than 3,000 newborns at 13 health facilities serving remote communities. An additional seven hospitals will implement the Bilikit™ in the La Libertad region in 2020.

"Before we had the Bilikit™, we had to conduct a lab test to detect bilirubin levels, which is not possible for babies in remote areas," said nurse Nancy Aponte. "But now, from the first hours after birth, we can determine if a newborn is jaundiced or non-jaundiced." Getting treatment in the first days of life is critical to preventing irreversible neurological damage.

The Bilikit™ is unique in that its components are portable and simple to use. For screening, the Bili-ruler™, developed by Brigham and Women's Global Newborn Health Lab, is as easy as matching an infant's skin tone to one of six circles on a six-inch ruler. The Bilistick®, developed by Bilimetrix, is a less intrusive means for quantitative diagnosis, requiring only a small drop of blood vs. a vial for conventional diagnosis. The uniquely portable, battery-capable Bili-Hut™, developed by Little Sparrows Technologies, makes bedside phototherapy possible in communities that lack access to adequate healthcare.

New mother Karina Herrera is thankful that her local health center in Junín was a beneficiary of the Bilikit™. "I was breastfeeding my baby and realized that his color was not normal; it was more yellow," she recalled. "I took him to the health center, and they told me that they will give him a treatment in the 'box of lights.'" At first, Herrera was fearful about the treatment. It was something she had never seen. "But little by little, I saw the results in just a few hours. I felt calmer and happy that the little box of lights was doing my baby a lot of good."

In Peru, where jaundice is a national public health problem, the Bilikit™ is being lauded as a game-changer in neonatal health. "The Bilikit™ and INMED's training will help us decrease the risk of cerebral palsy and other disabilities among our children," said Sari Marmolejo Orellana, a family health strategy coordinator in Junín. The project is expected to help some 12,000 newborns by 2021.

Watch video testimonials about the Bilikit™ at <https://inmed.org/andes/bilikit/>. Additional photos and videos available upon request.

### **About INMED Partnerships for Children:**

INMED Partnerships for Children is a nonprofit international development organization that has worked in more than 100 countries to build pathways for vulnerable children, families and communities to achieve well-being and self-reliance. INMED's programs in maternal/child health, adaptive agriculture/aquaponics and economic development break the cycle of intergenerational poverty and have made a sustainable impact on the lives of millions of children and their families since 1986. Learn more at <https://inmed.org>.