



Photo credit: Ayenew Haileselassie, Abt Associates  
Sitota and her husband Tura Jeba at Geda Health Center

## Health Care Financing Reform Enables Geda Health Center to Provide Emergency Surgical Services to the Community

Before May 2022, Geda Health Center in Adama, Oromia, would refer all patients needing surgery to other health facilities, such as Adama Hospital. As a result, patients requiring urgent surgical care might not receive it in a timely manner, depending on how quickly they could travel to and be treated at a referral facility. To improve patient access to emergency surgical services—particularly for maternal care—Geda’s governing board sought and obtained approval from the regional health bureau to introduce surgical services for caesarean section and other emergency surgeries.

In Ethiopia, health facility governing boards are established in public hospitals and health centers to provide oversight, direction, and guidance to health facility management, including on health care financing reform implementation. Having a governing board also allows for greater facility-level decision-making on how facility finances are used to improve service delivery and add services like surgical care.

## Community-Based Health Insurance Benefits Communities in Somali Region

Geda's board facilitated collaboration between the health center and other health facilities and non-governmental organizations to construct, equip, and provide temporary surgeons for their operating rooms. In March 2023, Geda recruited two emergency surgeons to replace the temporary surgeons and one of them, Eshetu Gudissa, performed the health center's first caesarian section with its own staff on March 16. The patient was Sitota Getnet, a 22-year old mother having her first child. Prior to the surgery, Sitota had been in labor for 12 hours and was getting scared. Unaware that the health center could perform cesarean sections, she asked her health provider to refer her to a hospital. "When they told me the operation could be done here, I agreed immediately" Sitota stated. Her husband, Tura Jeba, 23, said, "I was waiting outside in agony while she was laboring. They [provided excellent care to] my child and my wife."

Geda Health Center is a good example of how localized board decisions about how health facility budgets and human resources are used, can make tangible improvements to the range and quality of services facilities provide to their communities. The USAID Health Financing Improvement Program provides technical assistance to counterparts in Oromia and the rest of Ethiopia to further institutionalize health care financing reforms within government structures, including the governing board reform. Today, 87% of public hospitals and health centers in Ethiopia are managed by functional boards.

Article from **Health Financing**, a newsletter produced by the **USAID Health Financing Improvement Program**. The Program collaborates with the Ethiopian government to further strengthen health financing functions and systems to support universal health coverage of quality primary health care services for Ethiopian citizens with reduced financial barriers. Abt Associates implements the Program in collaboration with core partners Breakthrough International Consultancy, the Institute for Healthcare Improvement, and Results for Development, and resource partner Harvard School of Public Health. Cooperative Agreement No.: 72066319CA00001. [USAID Health Financing Improvement Program \(hfip-newsletter.com\)](https://www.hfip-newsletter.com)

This document is made possible by the support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.