

Contraceptive Stockout Early Warning System Extended to West and Central Africa To Improve Supply Availability

When Clients Leave Clinics Without Contraceptives

Countries struggle to maintain contraceptive supply for a variety of reasons including—

- poor planning
- lack of data on customer demand, and
- funding gaps or delays in procurement.

One of the biggest hurdles to improving contraceptive security—when every person is able to choose, obtain, and use quality contraceptives and condoms whenever she/he needs them—is a lack of reliable data on contraceptive supply. Stockouts and expiries may happen all the time but often the only people who know are the front-line service providers and the women who leave clinics without contraceptives. Unless this information reaches higher levels in the supply chain, action cannot be taken to remedy the situation and prevent future shortages. Meanwhile, without a steady supply of quality contraceptives, investments in service delivery, training, and demand generation are wasted.

Global Early Warning System

In 2007, the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition (RHSC) led the development of a global early warning system—the *Procurement Planning and Monitoring Report (PPMR)*. It provides information on stock levels and shipments for contraceptives for public sector, Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) and social marketing programs in 22 countries including Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, and Senegal. Participating countries report data to a central database where the country stock data are complemented by shipment data to give a complete picture of contraceptive supply. The data are used at the country and global levels by the Coordinated Assistance for Reproductive Health Supplies (CARhs) group to respond to supply issues. CARhs members include UNFPA, USAID, the World Bank, and the RHSC.

Benefits

Participation in the early warning system allows countries to communicate up-to-date data and supply needs to in-country stakeholders and



World Education 2004

A client holds a packet of condoms that she just received in Mali.

Participation Leads to Better Supply Availability

Over the last four years, CARhs used global early warning system data to provide critical country support, including—

- scheduling emergency shipments of male condoms to Zambia to mitigate stockouts after quality issues were discovered in a ministry of health procurement
- reducing stockouts of progestin-only pills in Tanzania after an objection from a losing bidder unexpectedly halted a World Bank procurement
- transferring U.S.\$2 million worth of implants from Rwanda to Burkina Faso to avoid expiry and provide product to a growing program.

donors. Countries may request that donors provide emergency shipments, expedite existing shipments, or delay shipments to avoid overstocks or expiries. CARHs considers requests monthly and its members take actions based on donor involvement in countries and ability to respond.

Participation in the early warning system raises the visibility of contraceptive supply issues and encourages accountability of both countries and donors to monitor stock supply. Collaboration and coordination are improved when country stock status and donor shipment data are linked in a routine and standard reporting format. Regular reporting can also help identify root causes where stock issues are frequent.

Bringing the Early Warning System to West and Central Africa

USAID and UNFPA are expanding the global early warning system through the development of a regionally focused early warning system for West and Central Africa. This system will complement existing global structures that do not have the capacity to focus on regional issues for West and Central Africa, the most under-served region in the world for family planning.

The ultimate goal of the expansion is to increase availability of contraceptives. By identifying reasons for supply problems, this strategy will help countries and development partners identify priorities to improve contraceptive security in the region. It will provide meaningful



In the Thies District of Senegal, a counselor-in-training discusses oral contraceptives with a client.

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support to all countries of the region and not just a limited set.

How It Works

The USAID | DELIVER PROJECT is establishing a regional office to provide technical assistance to countries who contribute to the early warning system. Countries will submit data on their stock levels to the global PPMR data facility. The USAID | DELIVER PROJECT regional office will provide assistance to countries in how to collect, compile, and submit their data. At the country level, the Ministry in charge of contraceptive supply will assign people to be responsible for the collection, analysis and transmission of data.

On a monthly basis, regional partners including USAID and UNFPA will review the stock data submitted to the global early warning system from West and Central Africa, and within available

resources develop plans to avoid or mitigate stockouts. The data from the system will also help partners identify the reasons for stockouts and provide longer-term assistance to avoid them in the future. While partners cannot address all contraceptive shortages, the increased visibility of and access to data will strengthen efforts within and outside the region to mobilize additional resources for contraceptive security in West and Central Africa.

How to Get Involved

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