

Strengthening Post-Ebola Recovery and Resiliency in Four Countries

OVERVIEW

A strong pharmaceutical management system is critical for responding to and preventing public health emergencies. The US Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded Systems for Improved Access to Pharmaceuticals and Services (SIAPS) Program, implemented by Management Sciences for Health (MSH), is helping four countries affected by Ebola—Sierra Leone, Guinea, Mali, and Benin—recover and rebuild essential drug management and delivery services and to increase their capacity and sustainability. The two-year project began in 2015.

STRENGTHENED SYSTEMS

The pharmaceutical sectors in these countries face challenges that worsened during and after the Ebola crisis. All four target countries have fragile supply chain systems. Weak information management led to a lack of timely, reliable medicine consumption and morbidity data for effective planning and decision making. There is an overall shortage of qualified pharmaceutical personnel at all levels. Efforts shifted to controlling the Ebola epidemic, and basic health services stopped or operated at a very low level. This cut into delivery of services for other public health priorities, such as antiretroviral drugs for HIV, maternal health, and malaria control.

Outdated policies and guidelines for medicines and medical supplies continue to hamper regulatory agencies that were already lacking the legislation and enforcement capacity to ensure the safety and effectiveness of pharmaceuticals. Further, the high volume of unusable Ebola donations is clogging already tight medicine storage spaces and hampering quality control.

Note: MSH is also assisting Liberia through the USAID-funded leadership, Management, and Governance (LMG) program.



APPROACH

Working with USAID, partners, and host governments, SIAPS is strengthening these countries' national central medical store systems, medicine regulatory agencies, and pharmacy departments to help them adopt and enforce adequate policies, guidelines, and norms. SIAPS is also building the capacity of regional, district, and health facility groups, such as district health management and drug and therapeutic committees, to carry out these advances and sustain health system performance.

Specific interventions include assessing each country's ability to address pharmaceutical supply chain and service delivery challenges. They also include promoting transparency and accountability, training and mentoring, stock status monitoring and reporting through adequate information systems to help ensure product availability, storage and inventory control improvements, and improving rational medicine use and safety.

SIERRA LEONE: TRACKING PROGRESS

In Sierra Leone, SIAPS is supporting key pharmaceutical government entities, including the Directorate of Drugs and Medical Supplies, the Pharmacy Board of Sierra Leone, district health management teams, and last mile health facilities, through a new country office. The program helped update the national medicines list to inform purchasing and selection; formed a national committee to handle quantification and introduce the automated SIAPS tools (Quantimed, QuanTB, and Pipeline); implemented a bi-monthly, countrywide continuous results monitoring and support system (CRMS) to ensure availability, inventory management, and rational use of pharmaceuticals; and helped build capacity at all levels to ensure sustainability. The CRMS has been implemented in 11 of the country's 13 districts as of October 2016.

SIAPS also assisted in the revision of the report, request and issue voucher (RR&IV), Sierra Leone's logistics management information system (LMIS), and designed a daily and monthly treatment/pharmacy register for use in approximately 1,200 public peripheral health units

and 21 district hospitals. The treatment register captures patient uptake; prevalence of priority diseases; and consumption and stock status data of key pharmaceuticals, including selected Ebola-related commodities.

GUINEA: STRENGTHENING LEADERSHIP AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS

In Guinea, SIAPS is building on its experience of implementing the USAID-funded President's Malaria Initiative for the last four years, including developing an LMIS to strengthen the supply chain. The SIAPS post-Ebola recovery plan focuses on scaling up interventions nationwide. It includes helping the Ministry of Health maximize its resources for capacity building, accountability, and quality assurance, including the national medical store parastatal Pharmacie Centrale de Guinee (PCG) and the Direction Nationale de la Pharmacie et des Laboratoires (DNPL) of the Ministry of Health. SIAPS is strengthening the country's LMIS to include the inventory and distribution of Ebola products to help ensure that they are safe and available.

Another key goal in Guinea is an automated pharmaceutical information management system to support decision making. With technical and financial support from SIAPS, the DNPL has developed a testing environment for a new, automated, electronic logistics management information system (eLMIS). Once the test phase is complete, the DNPL will roll out the new system nationwide.

MALI: RISK MANAGEMENT

With Ebola still present in Guinea, which shares a border with Mali, and large population shifts within West Africa, there is a risk of new Ebola cases in Mali. In this country, SIAPS supports the Ministry of Health's Department of Pharmacy and Medicines (DPM) in improving management of Ebola products and related information systems to help combat an outbreak. SIAPS helped the Ebola national coordination committee finalize an inventory of infection prevention and control products, job aids and posters, and a list of

essential items that the national medical stores and partners involved in supply chain management will follow for procurement. SIAPS provided technical assistance in Ebola commodities quantification and incorporated the data into a web-based dashboard for managing product and patient information, OPSANTE (Outil de Suivi des Produits de Sante), introduced with SIAPS support. SIAPS is also collaborating with the USAID-funded Advancing Newborn, Child and Reproductive Health program to design LMIS tools, including standard operating procedures and training materials. At the request of the Ministry of Health, SIAPS is also helping to develop a national Ebola strategic plan and establish a national logistics committee for Ebola.

BENIN: DISTRIBUTING SUPPLIES

Benin shares a border with Nigeria, where Ebola took hold, so preventing and preparing for an occurrence of the virus in Benin is critical. That includes effectively managing Ebola-related medicines and equipment and related information systems. Working with other organizations to promote a cohesive response, SIAPS is supporting the Ministry of Health's DPMED efforts to inventory, forecast the need for, purchase, store, and distribute Ebola-related products nationwide, including basic infection control items and communications materials. The program helped the Ministry of

Health compile a list of necessary Ebola products and establish a quantification working group to assess stock. To strengthen the LMIS, the program is helping to develop tools and training materials and standardize operating procedures. Information captured includes stock movement and status reporting. The program is also advising health workers at all levels on safe and secure product storage, handling, and distribution.

NEXT STEPS

Boosting pharmaceutical supply and delivery resilience contributes to the preparedness for, prevention and detection of, and response to emerging disease threats. For example, Benin's bolstered system improved its response to the recent outbreak of Lassa fever. Each country brings strengths to its challenges and uses them to test system improvements, such as the CRMS in Sierra Leone, the eLMIS in Guinea, the product inventory in Mali, and distribution systems in Benin. Improved automation, computer hardware and networks, and more advanced technology and data sharing will be important to improvement and to cross-pollinating best practices to all countries in the region. SIAPS will continue to promote knowledge sharing and best practices among all four countries and hopes to bring key partners together to share experiences and lessons learned in person.

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ABOUT SIAPS | The Systems for Improved Access to Pharmaceuticals and Services (SIAPS) program works to assure access to quality pharmaceutical products and effective pharmaceutical services through systems-strengthening approaches to achieve positive and lasting health outcomes. SIAPS is funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and is implemented by Management Sciences for Health.

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