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SIAPS
Systems for Improved Access
to Pharmaceuticals and Services

SIAPS West Africa Regional Project

Strengthening Health Systems to Assure the Availability
of Antiretrovirals and Other HIV/AIDS Commodities

Why Preventing Stock-Outs Matters

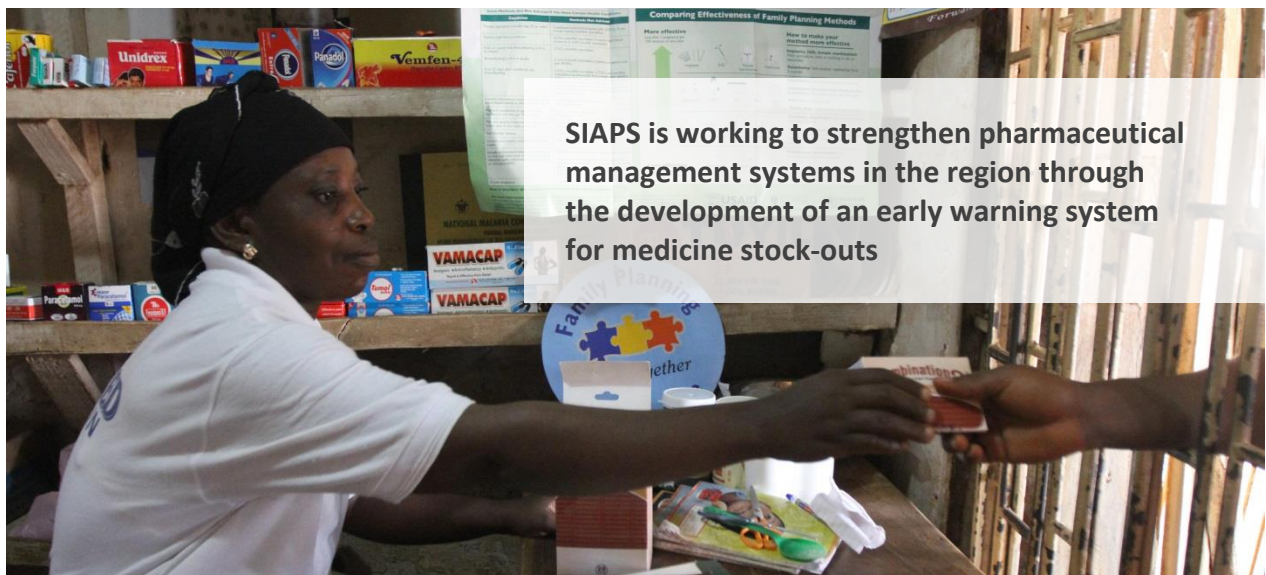
A reliable and regular supply of antiretroviral (ARV) medicines is necessary to keep HIV-positive people healthy and help control the spread of the HIV epidemic. However, frequent stock-outs of ARVs and other drugs used to treat related opportunistic infections can prevent patients from staying on or starting life-saving treatment regimens. Though sometimes difficult to pinpoint, the root causes of these stock-outs often stem from a lack of coordination between stakeholders, inadequate or underutilized supply chain information systems, and mismanagement of commodities.

The SIAPS Approach

The USAID-funded **Systems for Improved Access to Pharmaceuticals and Services (SIAPS)** program, with support from USAID's West Africa Regional Health Office, is working to strengthen pharmaceutical management systems in the region through the development of an early warning system for medicine stock-outs and the establishment of regional coordination mechanisms. By increasing information sharing among regional stakeholders, making supply chain information easier to use and interpret, and enhancing local capacity for pharmaceutical supply chain management, the program aims to reduce stock-outs and provide uninterrupted access to HIV and AIDS commodities.

Program Objectives

- Improve coordination among regional and national stakeholders to ensure availability of ARVs and related HIV and AIDS commodities
- Increase the use of pharmaceutical management information for decision making at national and regional levels
- Enhance access to financial resources for the procurement of ARVs
- Strengthen capacity for pharmaceutical management



Working Together to Prevent Stock-Outs: Coordinated Regional Management of Medicines

In six focus countries, SIAPS will work with national HIV and AIDS control programs to enhance the collection, analysis, and use of supply chain data to promote a more coordinated approach to commodity procurement and delivery. SIAPS will also facilitate the exchange of information and experiences by convening semi-annual regional meetings, along with more frequent sub-regional meetings, that will serve as a forum for stakeholders to:



- Discuss progress on implementation of national supply plans
- Review medicine stock status
- Evaluate planned procurement actions
- Conduct inventory management and quantification trainings to increase local capacity
- Share success stories and best practices
- Collaborate with other supply chain professionals

Early Warning System to Identify and Prevent Stock-Outs and Wastage

Utilizing a participatory approach, SIAPS will engage a variety of supply chain stakeholders to develop an early warning system (EWS) to help avoid stock-outs of HIV and AIDS commodities and prevent wastage. The EWS will be easily accessible online, built to accommodate a range of users with varying levels of permissions, and will feature a dashboard that will collect and display regional data in a meaningful and easy-to-interpret way. The dashboard will allow the spectrum of stakeholders—from program managers to ministry of health officials to donor agencies—to monitor commodity stock status, anticipate future funding gaps, respond to projected medicine shortages and expiries, and make decisions based on accurate information.

The data to be collected and analyzed by the EWS include:

- Country-specific information on the HIV epidemic
- National stock levels of ARVs and HIV test kits
- Expiration and oversupply tracking
- Commodity consumption rates
- Shipment status
- Available funding for procurement

Stronger Pharmaceutical Management, Stronger Health Systems

With recently revised guidelines from the World Health Organization calling for earlier initiation of ARV therapy (ART), most countries in West Africa expect an expansion in the number of people requiring treatment and care. This potential surge in patients, combined with the recognized personal and public health benefits of ART, means that providing a consistent and reliable supply of HIV and AIDS medicines is more important—and more challenging—than ever.

Through the West Africa Regional Project, SIAPS aims to help local and regional stakeholders identify and address key factors contributing to stock-outs, implement strategies to prevent them from occurring, and strengthen pharmaceutical management systems so that ARVs will always be available and used appropriately by the patients who need them.

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