

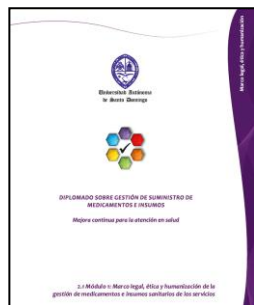


Combined On- and Off-Site Training Contributes to Strengthening Unified Pharmaceutical System in the Dominican Republic

With support from the Strengthening Pharmaceutical Systems (SPS) and Systems for Improved Access to Pharmaceuticals and Services (SIAPS) programs,¹ the Dominican Republic is organizing a single system for managing its medicines and medical supplies. This system, best known by its Spanish acronym, SUGEMI, originated conceptually in studies revealing stock-outs of critical medicines and medical supplies that were attributable to, among other things, fragmentation in purchasing, requisitions, and deliveries.^{2,3}



Following official backing for SUGEMI, in July 2010, by Ministerial Decree, project staff launched an accelerated implementation process that included development of operating manuals and procedures for all system components, complemented by training for staff of the National Pharmaceutical Management Unit (Unidad Nacional de Gestión de Medicamentos) and its decentralized supply agencies known as Regional Pharmaceutical Management Units (Unidades Regionales de Gestión de Medicamentos). This training was limited to practical content that would facilitate implementation of *start-up* activities: implementing a national inventory, transferring medicines and medical supplies from two disease control programs (TB and HIV/AIDS) to integrated regional warehouses, and placing periodic medicine orders and deliveries following standardized procedures.



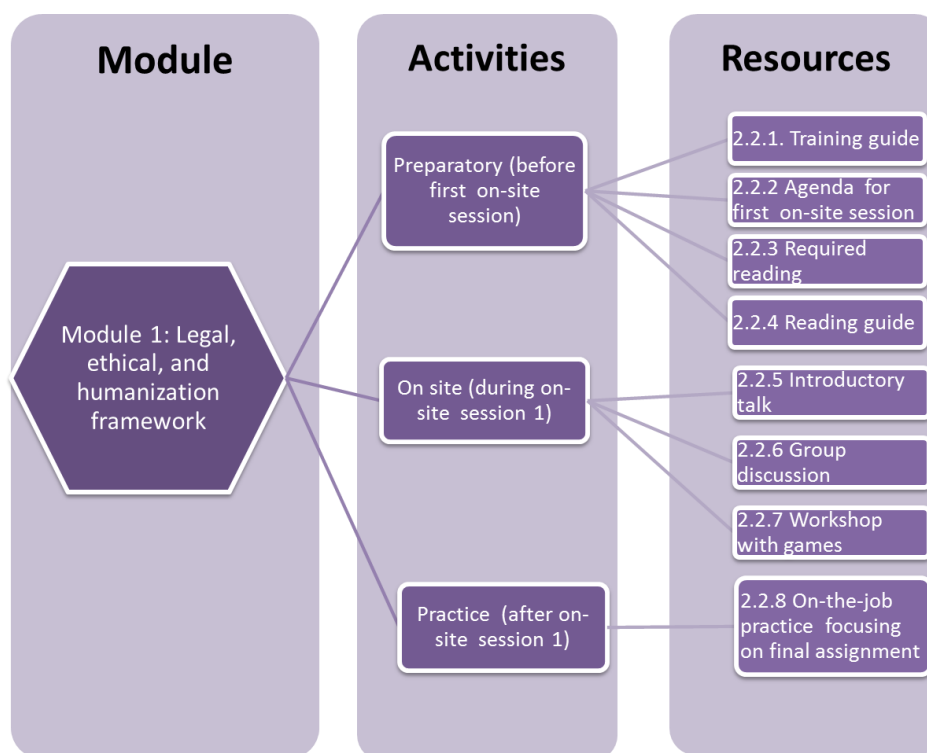
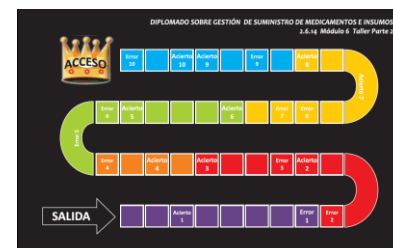
Both the strengthening and maintenance of SUGEMI are now dependent on *in-depth* training for all public health system staff responsible for supply functions. Accordingly, the SPS and SIAPS programs designed a methodology that will make it possible to learn essential aspects of pharmaceutical supply management while simultaneously acquiring the necessary tools and ability to apply SUGEMI procedures to Ministry of Public Health pharmaceutical services.

The Certificate Program in Pharmaceutical Supply Management is being offered by the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo (UASD) using a hybrid on-site/off-site approach. The program will be under the direction of health professionals who, ideally, are responsible for pharmaceutical supply management functions in the public sector. The university will assign a practice site to students who do not have one. The 10-week program will use the following methodologies:



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1. **Preparatory activities (individual reading):** The basic reading materials are MSH's book *Managing Drug Supply* and SUGEMI operating procedures. In addition, students should review national laws and regulations currently in effect, along with other selected documents.
2. **On-site session:** For 10 consecutive Saturdays, students meet in a classroom with the facilitator of the certificate program modules. The facilitator provides students with an overview of the topic, coordinates games and other group dynamics, discusses the challenges addressed in the previous week's practice work, and provides instructions designed to guide students' on-the-job practice for the following session.
3. **On-the-job practice:** Based on previously prepared guidelines, the student evaluates the status of specific components (depending on the training module) of the particular supply system in place in his or her institution. For most modules, information gathering involves the construction and analysis of indicators. During the on-site sessions, findings are shared by students in group discussions. Based on these discussions, students propose alternative interventions for addressing the problems identified during one of the weeks after the on-site session.



Before completion of the certificate program, each student is required to submit a systematic listing of the problems identified in his or her institution, the interventions implemented to correct those problems, and the results achieved.

Although the UASD Certificate Program in Pharmaceutical Supply Management will evaluate the extent of the knowledge acquired by students, their individual success will be measured in terms of SUGEMI consolidation and the improvements actually put in place by students in their institutions in the area of pharmaceutical supply management.

¹ Management Sciences for Health (MSH) programs financed by the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

² Management Sciences for Health. 2010. *Estudio de línea basal sobre la situación de la gestión de suministros de ITS, VIH y SIDA en República Dominicana*. Submitted to the US Agency for International Development by the Strengthening Pharmaceutical Systems (SPS) Program. Arlington, VA: Management Sciences for Health.

³ Barillas, E., and C. Valdez. 2008. *Análisis de la Gestión del Suministro de Medicamentos e Insumos de Salud del Sector Público en República Dominicana*. Included in Barillas, Edgar. 2008. *Informe de Viaje a República Dominicana: Julio de 2008*. Presented to the US Agency for International Development by the Strengthening Pharmaceutical Systems (SPS) Program. Arlington, VA: Management Sciences for Health.



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