Deep Dive – Drugs and Supplies

Drugs and supplies are essential elements of all functioning health systems. Making sure facilities have the right drugs and supplies at the right time and that patients can access affordable products when needed is imperative to delivering high-quality primary health care and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

To achieve this, the World Health Organization (WHO) identifies two related core principles of focus: ensuring quality, safety, and efficacy of health products and improving equitable access. Each focal area includes a subset of strategic levers that can be employed to support strong regulatory systems, quality manufacturing, efficient supply chains, and effective post-market surveillance.

Visual Aid - Drugs and Supplies

Drugs and Supplies

Drugs and supplies — which include medicines, vaccines, diagnostic supplies, consumable commodities, and assistive products — are essential elements of all functioning health systems.

Making sure facilities have the right drugs and supplies at the right time and that patients can access high-quality, affordable products when needed is critical to delivering high-quality PHC services. This requires a structured approach by the health system to ensure quality, safety, efficacy, and equitable access of drugs and supplies.
Drugs and Supplies is a key input of strong primary health care systems
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTION 1</th>
<th>SECTION 2</th>
<th>SECTION 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is Drugs and Supplies?</strong></td>
<td><strong>How do I assess my performance?</strong></td>
<td><strong>How do I get started?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What it is:</strong> Learn more about the core principles and goals of Drugs and Supplies.</td>
<td><strong>What it is:</strong> Learn more about some indications that improvements might be relevant in your context and what you can achieve by focusing improvements on Drugs and Supplies.</td>
<td><strong>Case studies:</strong> Learn from implementation approaches and challenges in other country contexts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relevance to PHC:</strong> Learn about Drugs and Supplies role in PHC improvement.</td>
<td><strong>Vital Signs Profile:</strong> Use the information in your Vital Signs Profile to help determine relevant areas for improvement.</td>
<td><strong>Tools and Resources:</strong> Explore and identify useful tools and resources relevant to Drugs and Supplies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>What to ask:</strong> Use guiding questions to help determine how you might begin to plan and enact reforms in your country context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Guided by the above considerations and relevant resources, start to build out an improvement plan with your CE lead and/or focal point.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What can my country achieve by focusing on Drugs and Supplies?

Goals & Outcomes

- **Improve** quality, safety, and efficacy of health products
- **Ensure** equitable access to affordable products
Learn more about whether you should focus on Drugs and Supplies in the Vital Signs Profile.
How do I assess my performance?

Use the information in the Vital Signs Profile to **help determine** relevant **areas of improvement**.
How do I assess my performance?

Use the information in the Vital Signs Profile to help determine relevant areas of improvement.
How do I assess my performance?

Use the information in the Vital Signs Profile to help determine relevant areas of improvement.

Measure 15: Essential Drug Availability

Measure 16: Basic Equipment Availability

Measure 17: Vaccine Availability
What are other indications that Drugs and Supplies might be an appropriate area of focus?

Other Indications

- The Supply Chain for drugs and supplies is **unreliable, poorly managed**, for the wrong products, or does not reach its end user.

- National Regulatory Medicines Authorities are understaffed, underfunded, or otherwise **unable to carry out their duties**.

- Diagnostic equipment, medicines, vaccines, immunization-related equipment, or medical devices **do not meet the international standard**.

- There is **no system in place to assess the adequacy** of the supply chain, the regulatory committees, or the equipment and drugs.

- Drugs and Supplies are **not evenly and equitably distributed** throughout the population.
Drugs and Supplies

Drugs and supplies are essential elements of all functioning health systems. Making sure facilities have the right drugs and supplies at the right time and that patients can access affordable products when needed is imperative to delivering high-quality primary health care and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

To achieve this, the World Health Organization (WHO) identifies two related core principles of focus: ensuring quality, safety, and efficacy of health products and improving equitable access. Each focal area includes a subset of strategic levers that can be employed to support strong regulatory systems, quality manufacturing, efficient supply chains, and effective post-market surveillance.

Visual Aid - Drugs and Supplies

Learn more about the core principles of Drugs and Supplies and what you can achieve by focusing improvements.
What is Drugs and Supplies?

The term **Drugs and Supplies** refers to all medicines, vaccines, products, and technologies at primary care facilities.

Drugs and Supplies focuses on the **performance** of supply chains and the **availability** of essential medicines, vaccines, products, and technologies at primary care facilities.
What is Drugs and Supplies?

Drugs and Supplies refers to all medicines, vaccines, products, and technologies at primary care facilities.

Drugs and Supplies focuses on the performance of supply chains and the availability of essential medicines, vaccines, products, and technologies at primary care facilities.

Why it’s important for PHC

- **Ensures** facilities and frontline providers have access to drugs and supplies at the right time, important for the delivery of high-quality PHC
- **Promotes** equitable distribution of drugs and supplies, supporting universal access to high-quality PHC
- **Ensures** that quality, affordable products are available to patients at all levels of the health system
What is Drugs and Supplies?

Drugs and Supplies refers to all medicines, vaccines, products, and technologies at primary care facilities.

Drugs and Supplies focuses on the performance of supply chains and the availability of essential medicines, vaccines, products, and technologies at primary care facilities.

Key steps and considerations

**Ensuring quality, safe, and effective health products**
This can be achieved through regulatory system strengthening, market surveillance, quality assessment, and prequalification of health products to meet global quality standards.

**Improving equitable access**
Improving equitable access requires policy and programmatic efforts throughout the value chain from development through delivery. This includes evidence-based selection, supply chain management, and appropriate prescribing and use.

**Strengthening supply chains**
Supply chains can be made more efficient through robust supply chain management – including efficient product selection, quantification, procurement, and distribution – and various operational functions, such as appropriate financing, performance management, and risk management.
Drugs and Supplies

Drugs and supplies — which include medicines, vaccines, diagnostic supplies, consumable commodities, and assistive products — are essential elements of all functioning health systems. Making sure facilities have the right drugs and supplies at the right time and that patients can access high-quality, affordable products when needed is imperative to delivering high-quality PHC services. This requires a structured approach by the health system to ensure quality, safety, efficacy and equitable access of drugs and supplies.
Deeper dive: Supply chain management

Supply chain management involves obtaining resources, managing supplies, and delivering goods and services to providers and patients. SCM activities include:

**Serving customers** – Ensure that customers receive the right products at the right times.

**Product selection** – Country committees (regulatory agencies and regulatory professionals in pharmacy, medicine, and nursing practices) select products and essential medicines and supply lists.

**Quantification** – ensures an uninterrupted supply of products by projecting the quantity and cost of the products needed by a health unit or program and determining when the products should be procured and delivered.

**Inventory strategy** - Enables organizations to balance supply and demand. Integrated inventory strategies define policies that guide product selection, quantification, and storage plans.

**Procurement** – Once a quantification supply plan is complete, drugs and supplies must be procured. Through careful research, planning, monitoring and attention to applicable regulations, health systems and programs will enable timely and quality-assured supply procurement.

**Warehousing & distribution** - After procurement, there must be a structured approach to the physical management of a product through each of the supply chain. This protects the item from environmental harm or handling to ensure its quality and condition upon use.
Drugs and Supplies – How do I get started?

Learn more about **What others have done, What to ask** and the **Tools and Resources** tool to help determine where and how you might start to enact forms in your country context.
Planning for improvement in your context

The guidance and recommendations described within the Drugs and Supplies module are not intended to provide a one-size-fits-all solution.

The considerations involved in planning and implementing strategies will depend on your local context.

Sample activities

- **Consider** implementation challenges and approaches in other country contexts

- **Understand how the features of your health system**, such as how decisions get made and the role of the private sector, will impact your improvement plans

- **Identify** key elements that need to be in place to support improvements

- **Use the guiding questions in the Improvement Strategies** to spur thinking about [Module] in your country context and stimulate ideas for improvement

- **Start to develop** an improvement plan
Planning for improvement in your context

While the **specific considerations** involved in planning and implementing strategies will depend on your **context**, you might consider...

- **What are the enabling factors for high quality Drugs and Supplies?**
  - Efficient supply chains
  - Strong-regulatory systems
  - Market surveillance and assessment mechanisms
  - Innovation to foster R&D
  - Application and management of intellectual property

- **What are the key elements of the above factors?**
  - Data and market surveillance systems
  - Appropriate R&D for affordable, suitable new treatments
  - Fair pricing and reimbursement practices
  - Local production of essential drugs and supplies
  - Competent workforce
  - Involvement of the private sector
  - Protection of intellectual property
Learn from what others have done

Accredited Drug Dispensing Outlets | Tanzania
Ensuring quality and safety of medicines by converting informal vendors to accredited drug dispensing outlets

Single System for Managing Medicines and Medical Supplies | Dominican Republic
Decreasing waste and stock outs through standardizing operating procedures for supply chain management
Tanzania: At-a-glance context

Sub-Saharan Africa
Low income
Swahili and English
## Tanzania: At-a-glance context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GDP per capita ($PPP)</th>
<th>Human Development Index</th>
<th>Life expectancy at birth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$1.1K</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of population living in rural areas</th>
<th>Percentage of population living under $1.90 per day</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>65%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>56.32M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learn from what others have done: Tanzania

Why reforms were needed

• Lack of access to reliable medicines dispensed by trained providers

• Dependence on unregulated local vendors who had no formal training

Approach

Building on exiting infrastructure Tanzanian health authorities converted informal vendors to accredited drug dispensing outlets (ADDOs)

Financial Incentives
Health authorities provided ADDOs with incentives and training programs to address individual capacity and accreditation needs

Health authorities trained over 3000 shop inspectors
Learn from what others have done: Tanzania

Strengths

- **Strengthens** regulatory capacity of NMRAs
- **Establishes** accredited locations for acquiring high-quality drugs and supplies
- **Supports** a strong supply chain that delivers high quality drugs and supplies to providers
- **Focuses** on ensuring quality standards are met and comprehensive PHC is delivered
Learn from what others have done: Tanzania

- **Education, recruitment, and retention:** this program had trained over 19,000 providers - each linked directly to local primary care facilities - in almost 6,100 shops, with a further 3,100 in training.

- **Incentive structures and government regulation:** The ADDOs were provided with financial incentives and tailor-made training programs to address their individual capacity needs to become accredited. All ADDOs are required by law to adhere to standards related to product and service quality in order to maintain government accreditation.
Learn from what others have done: Tanzania

The ADDO program has demonstrated the importance of quality assurance and the mechanisms—regulatory oversight, workforce training, and investment—that strengthen health systems.

However, more work can be done investing similarly in other inputs of Primary Health Care such as: facility infrastructure, information systems, workforce, and funding.
Dominican Republic: At-a-glance context

- Latin America & Caribbean
- Upper-Middle
- Small island state
Dominican Republic: At-a-glance context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GDP per capita ($PPP)</th>
<th>Human Development Index</th>
<th>Life expectancy at birth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$16K</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of population living in rural areas</th>
<th>Percentage of population living under $1.90 per day</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>10.8M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learn from what others have done: Dominican Republic

Why reforms were needed

• Supply stock outs and parallel procurement strategies

• Inefficient supply chains

• The use of multiple fleets of vehicles traveling to the same locations

• The existence of separate warehouses, inventory management systems, dispatch, and requisitions for each Disease Control Program

Approach

By introducing standard operating procedures for all components of the supply chain management system the Dominican Republic was able to increase system efficiency.

Transferring distribution of supply chain components to specialized units of SUGEMI (eg the National Pharmaceutical Supply Management Unit)

Keeping selection and use coordination components with each individual Disease Control Program
Learn from what others have done:

- **Supports** a strong supply chain that delivers high quality drugs and supplies to providers
- **Simplifies** procurement by creating a single supply system
- **Accommodates** unique needs of communities by ensuring local knowledge and needs could are considered
- **Uses** information systems to monitor and improve the availability and reach of drugs and supplies.
Learn from what others have done:

- **Addresses** fragmentation, inefficiency, and inequality in medical drugs and supplies by creating a single supply system.

- **Decentralizes** responsibility for supply selection to ensure local knowledge and needs could be taken into account while maintaining efficiency by centralizing bulk procurement.

- **Increases** process efficiency by streamlining the drug and supply information system.

- **Transfers** certain distribution chain components to specialized units of SUGEMI (such as the National Pharmaceutical Supply Management Unit, or UNGM in Spanish).
Questions to ask to help you get started

The specific considerations involved in planning and implementing strategies will depend on your local context.

The questions listed may be a useful starting place to determine how you might begin to plan and enact reforms in your context.

Sample questions

☐ How effective are existing regulatory systems?
The specific considerations involved in planning and implementing strategies will depend on your local context.

The questions listed may be a useful starting place to determine how you might begin to plan and enact reforms in your context.

**Sample questions**

- How effective are existing regulatory systems?
- Is there a country-wide supply chain model?
The specific considerations involved in planning and implementing strategies will depend on your local context.

The questions listed may be a useful starting place to determine how you might begin to plan and enact reforms in your context.

**Sample questions**

- How effective are existing regulatory systems?
- Is there a country-wide supply chain model?
- What processes are in place for evidence-based selection of drugs and supplies that are delivered in the PHC system?
Questions to ask to help you get started

The **specific considerations** involved in planning and implementing strategies will depend on your local context.

The questions listed may be a useful **starting place to determine how you might begin to plan and enact reforms** in your context.

Sample questions

- How effective are existing regulatory systems?
- Is there a country-wide supply chain model?
- What processes are in place for evidence-based selection of drugs and supplies that are delivered in the PHC system?
- Is there responsibility for market surveillance and assessment of quality, safety and performance of drugs and supplies?
The specific considerations involved in planning and implementing strategies will depend on your local context.

The questions listed may be a useful starting place to determine how you might begin to plan and enact reforms in your context.

Sample questions

- How effective are existing regulatory systems?
- Is there a country-wide supply chain model?
- What processes are in place for evidence-based selection of drugs and supplies that are delivered in the PHC system?
- Is there responsibility for market surveillance and assessment of quality, safety and performance of drugs and supplies?
- Is there a systematic approach to supporting, supervising, and maintaining supply chain management (SCM) staff?
Questions to ask to help you get started

The specific considerations involved in planning and implementing strategies will depend on your local context.

The questions listed may be a useful starting place to determine how you might begin to plan and enact reforms in your context.

Sample questions

- How effective are existing regulatory systems?
- Is there a country-wide supply chain model?
- What processes are in place for evidence-based selection of drugs and supplies that are delivered in the PHC system?
- Is there responsibility for market surveillance and assessment of quality, safety and performance of drugs and supplies?
- Is there a systematic approach to supporting, supervising, and maintaining supply chain management (SCM) staff?
- What is the role of the pharmacist in this country? Do pharmacists have the training, regulation, and incentives they need to perform this role?
- Is the need for assistive products being met?
Recap: Drugs and Supplies

System
- Governance & Leadership
  - Primary Health Care Policies
  - Quality Management Infrastructure
  - Social Accountability
- Health Financing
  - Payment Systems
  - Spending on Primary Health Care
  - Financial Coverage
- Adjustment to Population Health Needs
  - Surveillance
  - Priority Setting
  - Innovation & Learning

Inputs
- Facility Infrastructure
- Information Systems
- Workforce
- Funds
- Drugs & Supplies

Service Delivery
- Population Health Management
  - Local Priority Setting
  - Community Engagement
  - Empanelment
  - Proactive Population Outreach
- Facility Organization & Management
  - Team-based Care Organization
  - Facility Management
  - Capability & Leadership
  - Information Systems Use
  - Performance Measurement & Management Outreach
- Access
  - Financial
  - Geographic
  - Timeliness
- Availability of Effective PHC Services
  - Provider Availability
  - Provider Competence
  - Provider Motivation
  - Patient-provider Respect & Trust

Outputs
- High Quality Primary Health Care
  - First Contact Accessibility
  - Continuity
  - Comprehensiveness
  - Coordination
  - Person-centered
- Effective Service Coverage
  - Health Promotion
  - Disease Prevention
  - RMNCH
  - Childhood Illness
  - Infectious Disease
  - NCDs & Mental Health
  - Palliative Care

Outcomes
- Health Status
- Responsiveness to People
- Equity
- Efficiency
- Resilience of Health Systems

Social Determinants & Context (Political, Social, Demographic & Socioeconomic)
Recap: Drugs and Supplies

Drugs and Supplies — which include medicines, vaccines, diagnostic supplies, consumable commodities, and assistive products — are essential elements of all functioning health systems.

Making sure facilities have the right drugs and supplies at the right time and that patients can access high-quality, affordable products when needed is imperative to delivering high-quality PHC services. This requires a structured approach by the health system to ensure quality, safety, efficacy, and equitable access of drugs and supplies.