



FACT SHEET

Component 2: Delivery of Evidence-Based, Quality PHC Services

The USAID/Primary Health Care Project in Iraq (PHCPI)'s strategic approach to strengthening the quality of Primary Health Care (PHC) services incorporates innovative Quality Improvement (QI) models, emphasizing community involvement, compliance with evidence-based standards of care, and use of facility-based QI teams in combination with supportive supervision techniques. Under project component 2, USAID/PHCPI is working closely with counterparts within the Ministry of Health (MOH) to focus on establishing standards of care, developing and introducing quality improvement programs, expanding high-quality in-service training programs, and developing an agenda for conducting research to fuel further evidence-based improvements. To ensure the availability and utilization of high quality clinical services, especially for women, children, and vulnerable or displaced populations, the project focuses on the following areas.

Improving Quality Clinical Care Standards

In close collaboration with the Directorate of Public Health Directorate and other stakeholders, USAID/PHCPI is helping the MOH to update/revise 20 priority treatment protocols and clinical guidelines found in the Iraq Basic Health Services Package. USAID/PHCPI has finalized the updated clinical guidelines related to Infection Prevention and Waste Management, Diabetes Mellitus, Hypertension, Asthma, Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (IMCI) for Nurses, Communicable Disease Control, and Trauma. The updated guidelines are being introduced to service providers from the project's 360 target clinics through in-service training. In collaboration with the MOH, USAID/PHCPI identified eight clinical guidelines that will be updated and tested in the coming year and convened technical working groups to begin drafting each of the guidelines. These include: Maternal and Child Nutrition, IMCI for Physicians, Emergency Obstetric, Newborn Care, Obesity, Nursing Standards, Laboratory Standards, Women Health of Reproductive Age (Breast and Cervical Cancer, Menopause, Premarital Counseling). These and other updated/revise clinical guidelines will be incorporated into a Clinical Service Guidelines Handbook, which will offer a collection of easy-to-use clinician's reference guides with treatment protocols and performance-based checklists for each category of primary care services offered at PHC centers. USAID/PHCPI is also working with the MOH to assess and improve clinical supervision systems and develop stronger patient referral networks.

Collaborating to Emphasize QI

USAID/PHCPI worked with MOH to develop a QI strategy to improve the quality of PHC services. The project team will assist the MOH in introducing the

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PHC QI Program through both clinic-based QI teams and multi-clinic Improvement Collaboratives. USAID/PHCPI will integrate many of the basic elements of traditional health programming (standards, training, job aids, equipment and supplies) with modern QI elements (team work, process analysis, monitoring of results, client satisfaction) to create a dynamic learning system where teams from different sites collaborate to share and rapidly scale up strategies for improving the quality and efficiency of health services in a specific technical or management area.

Supporting Operational Research for PHC

USAID/PHCPI worked with MOH and university partners to identify priority research topics to determine and apply evidence-based solutions to improve PHC systems. The project will assist in translating research results into specific improvements in policy design and implementation, resource management, and clinical processes, while also building the capacity of MOH staff to design and conduct operational research studies in the future. In 2012, USAID/PHCPI conducted two research studies: 1) an evaluation for the maternal mortality, and 2) an evaluation of the Health Visitor Program in Maysan. The results of these studies are now available and will be used to guide MOH priority planning and decision making.

Developing Model Clinics

USAID/PHCPI is working with the MOH to refurbish 36 PHC centers with all of the required medical equipment and supplies necessary to effectively provide the services outlined in Iraq's Basic Health Services Package and to apply the newly acquired knowledge and skills obtained through USAID/PHCPI training and capacity building activities. PHCPI and the MOH's shared vision of a model clinic is a functional clinic equipped with modern medical devices, stocked with enough drugs and consumables, and efficiently functioning through reliable health systems and well trained staff, practicing clinical protocols and guidelines to ensure the application of best practices. It is the goal of the model clinic activities to achieve the maximum impact of the technical competence of the service providers and the optimal physical environment, collectively contributing to enhancement of quality PHC services. It is the intention of the Government of Iraq (GoI) to upgrade the balance of the 360 clinics to meet this model standard.