SCMS

IN BRIEF

PEPFAR
Implementing Partner

In Zimbabwe: integrating supply chain management into pre-service training of pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and nurses

SCMS's intervention on training pre-service trainers has helped provide graduating bio-medical students with supply chain skills and reduce long term in-service training costs.

Zimbabwe is implementing a pre-service training (PST) strategy for pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and nurses in the University of Zimbabwe School of Pharmacy (UZ), the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare's (MoHCW) Pharmacy Technician Training School (PTTS) and Harare Polytechnic (HP), as well as various nurse training schools across the country. This initiative is expected to strengthen in-country capacity to manage national supply chains, ensuring uninterrupted access to HIV & AIDS and other essential health commodities. Integrated PST is predicted to build confidence among donor partners to provide higher levels of commodity and logistics support.

Background

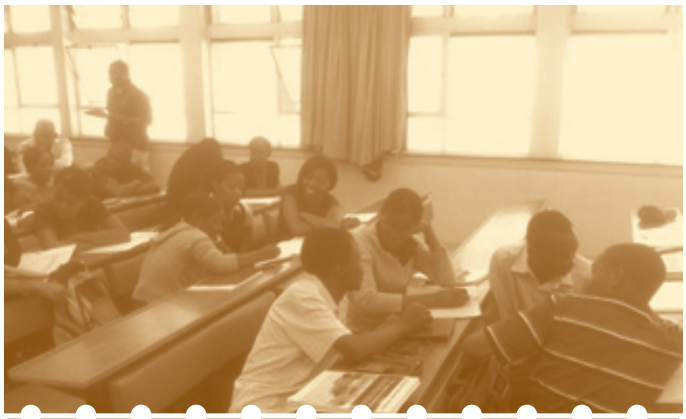
Like many developing countries, Zimbabwe has, over the years, relied on in-service training as a primary strategy for building capacity in supply chain management for public sector healthcare workers. This approach informed staff of new policies, technologies and protocols; however it took healthcare workers away from their posts for periods ranging from one day to over a week long. Furthermore, in-service training proved costly and relied heavily on donor support – both detractions from management sustainability.

PST reduces the need for, and reliance upon, costly in-service training. Effectively integrated into university and other tertiary institutions' coursework, PST introduces the principles and practices of supply chain management (SCM) of health commodities to future health workers while they are still enrolled in school. Recognizing the benefits of PST, as identified by the USAID | DELIVER PROJECT, the MoHCW sought SCMS assistance and input in launching PST for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians in 2011. In addition, SCMS has helped with advocating for the introduction of SCM into PST programs for nurses.

SCMS In Action

SCMS helped introduce supply chain management principles and practices and training on MOHCW's current SCM systems as part of PST implementation. With SCMS support, the MOHCW:

- Developed a two-year pre-service SCM curriculum for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians in collaboration



PST session in progress at the University of Zimbabwe School of Pharmacy (September 2011)

with three training schools (The University of Zimbabwe School of Pharmacy, Pharmacy Technicians Training School and Harare Polytechnic training college), with additional support from stakeholders such as the Pharmacists Council of Zimbabwe.

- Conducted a Training of Trainers (TOT) course for 10 lecturers and tutors from the training schools to orient them on details of the hands-on, competency based final curriculum.
- Provided resource materials for the training of 240 students from the three schools with academic years commencing in September 2011 and January 2012.
- Continued discussions with MOHCW's Directorate of Nursing Services on introducing SCM sessions during PST courses for nurses, and provided needs assessments at three nurse training institutes.
- Visited training schools and encountered tutors with a high level of enthusiasm and recognition of the need to upgrade the SCM component of nurse training. Nurses are often blamed when medicines expire and yet have no training on calculating stock levels.
- Met with the Principal Tutor of Parirenyatwa Hospital School of Nursing who stated that they are willing to spearhead the piloting of the SCM course with authorization from the Directorate of Nursing Services in the MoHCW.

Lessons Learned

Adopting PST enables trainees to perform more effectively during their government service. Benefits to Zimbabwe's healthcare system include:

- Healthcare workers understand the importance of commodity security and apply country-specific commodity management procedures.
- Commodities are better managed as soon as the healthcare worker begins service.
- Healthcare workers see commodity management as an integral part of duties, not as an add-on task.
- Healthcare workers understand the link between commodity availability and client service.
- Healthcare workers require less in-service training time for learning commodity management, resulting in more time for their primary role of serving clients.

Student Testimony

PST graduates attest to the value of the PST program in ensuring pharmacy graduates leave school fully prepared for effective supply chain management upon deployment to health facilities across the country. In September 2011, SCMS provided a support visit to the University of Zimbabwe School of Pharmacy, after the launch of the school's integrated PST program. Students were eager to share their feedback:

- "The course is very relevant. I was on attachment for six weeks during the vacation and had a lot of questions related to stock management which I did not get answers to then but which have all been addressed during this course. Thank you." – *Naume Ndoro, B. Pharm 4th year student 2011*
- "Thank you for introducing this program and for the support with materials. The program has come at the right time for us as fourth year students as we will now go out well informed and equipped to manage the supply of health commodities upon completion of our studies." – *Tendai Samkange, B. Pharm 4th year student 2011*
- "This is a very relevant course for us as pharmacy students. It will do away with the need for in-service training which is expensive. It has prepared us well for the field on completion of our studies." – *Forget Mupfunya, B. Pharm 4th year student and President of the Zimbabwe Pharmacy Students Association (ZPSA)*

ABOUT SCMS

The Supply Chain Management System (SCMS) was established to collaborate within country and global partners to ensure a reliable, cost-effective and secure supply of high quality medicines and health products for HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment. SCMS is funded as part of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. Visit us at www.scms.pfscm.org.

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the US Agency for International Development or the United States government.

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