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INITIATIVE**

Approaches that Work

# COMMUNITY-BASED DISTRIBUTION OF INJECTABLE CONTRACEPTIVES

Contraceptive prevalence rates in many sub-Saharan African countries surged in the mid-1990s. Much of this increase can be attributed to additional resources devoted to family planning (FP) programs and the uptake of specific methods, including injectable contraceptives. For example, use of injectables in Malawi grew from 2 percent in 1992 to 18 percent in 2004. Surveys in many African countries have found that women prefer injectable contraceptives; in some cases, preference for injectables is 2-1 over oral contraceptives and other methods. In recent years, however, these same countries have experienced a stagnation or decline in overall contraceptive prevalence. Particularly in rural areas, modern contraceptives are often scarce, and few trained professionals are available to provide FP services. One way to increase access to and use of family planning is to promote community-based distribution (CBD) of injectables. Countries struggling with stagnating contraceptive prevalence can begin to alter this trend by training and empowering community-based workers to provide injectable contraceptives.

## OUR APPROACH

The USAID | Health Policy Initiative, Task Order 1, assists national governments—in countries such as Malawi and Rwanda—to incorporate injectable contraceptives into CBD programs. Key components of our approach include:

- **Making the case for increasing access to injectable contraceptives:** The project uses compelling data to advocate for adoption of CBD of injectable contraceptives. Our analytic computer models demonstrate that CBD of injectables can help satisfy the high unmet need for family planning in many African countries and free up scarce, community-level health resources to address other acute healthcare needs. We synthesize and present evidence from studies demonstrating that CBD of injectables is clinically safe, and prepare case studies on successful CBD approaches.
- **Formulating policies:** The Health Policy Initiative collaborates with national and district governments to identify the policies and reforms needed to foster effective implementation and scale-up of CBD of injectable contraceptives. Illustrative policies and operational guidelines include national regulatory policies, standard operating procedures for the new service model, and supervisory and monitoring guidelines.
- **Assessing contraceptive security mechanisms:** CBD programs require a stable supply of injectable contraceptives. Thus, the project conducts analyses to examine health financing mechanisms, operational barriers, procurement policies, and other relevant structures (at centralized and decentralized levels). These analyses highlight any issues or bottlenecks that need to be addressed to distribute commodities through the supply chain down to the community-level health worker.
- **Facilitating private sector involvement:** The Health Policy Initiative employs a total market approach, considering resources available in the public and private sectors. The project uses market segmentation and other research tools to assist governments to remove barriers and open markets, link the private sector to community-level providers, and increase access to high-quality, affordable methods for FP clients.

### For More Information

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The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the U.S. government.

**TASK ORDER I**

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