



## First Person

# Automation for Hospital Pharmacies Improves Patient Care in Ethiopia



USAID | DELIVER PROJECT 2011

At Mekelle Hospital, the new computer system is helping pharmacy staff manage and track drugs and health commodities better.

**Since we started using HCMIS FE, I no longer worry about misplaced products and expiries.**

**—Ms. Berut Birhane  
Pharmacy Technician**

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Ms. Berut Birhane, a pharmacy technician, manages the health commodity stores at Mekelle Hospital, one of the biggest hospitals in Ethiopia's Tigray region. She has more than 300 products in her inventory and remembers being overwhelmed by the complex manual tasks of keeping track of every product's location, stock level, expiry dates, and other information. At times, medicines were stocked out and patients were asked to buy drugs from private pharmacies.

Since 2005, the USAID | DELIVER PROJECT has partnered with Tigray's Regional Health Bureau to improve public health logistics. Among other activities, the project introduced custom-designed software that can help facilities overcome the challenges of manually tracking large inventories. Eight of the twelve hospitals in Tigray now use the Health Commodity Management Information System, Facility Edition (HCMIS FE), to manage products in the hospital stores. The system has improved inventory control and reporting significantly; managers can easily anticipate stockouts, which negatively affect patient care, and request supplies before they run out.

Birhane was first introduced to the new system last year and now uses it to manage her store. "Since we started using the HCMIS FE, I no longer worry about misplaced products and expiries," she says. "The HCMIS FE is so simple and user-friendly that I learned it easily, despite having little experience with computers."

With the new system, Birhane can easily order new supplies and report consumption data to her supervisor. She helps improve patient care by keeping important medicines on the shelves.

The improvements in the Tigray region are part of a larger initiative by the Ethiopian Ministry of Health and its partners, including the USAID | DELIVER PROJECT, to increase the availability of drugs and medical supplies in hospitals and health centers throughout the country.

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**USAID | DELIVER PROJECT**

John Snow, Inc.

1616 Fort Myer Drive, 11th Floor

Arlington, VA 22209 USA

Phone: 703-528-7474

Fax: 703-528-7480

Email: [askdeliver@jsi.com](mailto:askdeliver@jsi.com)

Internet: [deliver.jsi.com](http://deliver.jsi.com)