

HEALTH POLICY PLUS: Nigeria

Overview

Health Policy Plus (HP+) is a five-year project funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by a consortium of partners, led by Palladium. Globally, the project works to strengthen and advance health policy to improve the enabling environment for equitable and sustainable health services, supplies, and delivery systems in the areas of family planning and reproductive health, HIV, and maternal health. A key tenet of HP+ is to maximize resources for health by increasing sustainable, predictable, and adequate financing for health programs and health policy implementation.

In Nigeria, HP+ is working in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) to strengthen its health financing structures, and its capacity to capitalize on key health financing reforms. These efforts build on past successes by HP+ and its predecessor projects to develop the capacity of national and state-level advocacy working groups to conduct evidence-based advocacy to increase funding for family planning at the federal and state levels.

Our Work

Nigeria is currently undergoing significant health financing reforms, that if fully implemented, would substantially increase resources for health and extend primary health care to all Nigerians. HP+ Nigeria is working with key stakeholders in the FCT to advance two key objectives:

1. Strengthen the FCT's governance and coordination to achieve stewardship and ownership of health financing reforms
2. Increase sustainable and predictable financial resources for health within the FCT

In pursuit of these objectives, HP+ is collaborating with the FCT to implement the following activities:

Launching and strengthening the FCT's Health Finance and Equity Technical Working Group

HP+ is supporting the FCT's Health and Human Services Secretariat to establish and facilitate a Health Finance and Equity Technical Working Group to advise on key health financing and equity issues and challenges. The working group—whose members are drawn from FCT leadership, academia, professional organizations, civil society, and the private sector—will also help advance critical health financing reforms and provide advisory-level guidance on key health financing initiatives and activities in the FCT.

Positioning the FCT to access the Basic Health Care Provision Fund

Nigeria's Basic Health Care Provision Fund is intended to substantially increase access to primary health care and reduce high out-of-pocket spending on healthcare, especially among poor Nigerians. To access the fund, states must contribute counterpart funding and have in place a state health insurance scheme and primary health care board. To help the

FCT comply with these national requirements, HP+ is working with FCT leadership and key stakeholders to review and revise the FCT Health Services Scheme and Primary Health Care Board bills and develop operational guidelines for each bill.

HP+ is also working to help ensure passage of both bills. Unlike other states in Nigeria, the FCT does not have its own State Assembly and therefore, does not have the authority to pass its own laws. Instead, FCT bills must move through the National Assembly, where political interest and support are not always strong enough to secure passage. To anticipate potential challenges and opportunities surrounding the bills' passage HP+ Nigeria is conducting a political economy analysis to uncover underlying power dynamics of the FCT bills' passage and is working with FCT leadership, civil society, and other nongovernmental organizations to develop and execute an advocacy plan to ensure that the bills advance through the National Assembly. In anticipation of the bills' passage, HP+ is also working with key FCT stakeholders to assess the state's readiness to receive resources from the Basic Health Care Provision Fund and will provide ongoing technical support to the FCT to operationalize recommendations from the assessment.

Supporting the FCT to mobilize resources to implement the costed FCT Strategic Health Development Plan II

In line with the national strategy, the FCT has developed their own five-year costed plan, the FCT Strategic Health Development Plan II. Yet, to put the plan in action, the FCT will need to mobilize the required resources. HP+ is assisting the FCT Health and Human Services Secretariat to map public and private resources for health and identify new or untapped funding streams to increase the resource pool for financing the strategic plan. A formal "fiscal

space" analysis will identify available and potential untapped resources and will inform the development of a resource mobilization plan. The plan will serve as a roadmap for the FCT on how to mobilize the maximum resources from existing sources, tap new financing sources, and direct those resources to specific components of the FCT Strategic Health Development Plan II.

Other key activities

Additionally, HP+ is currently supporting the following initiatives in Nigeria:

- Supporting the National Population Council to achieve presidential support of the updated National Policy on Population for Sustainable Development. HP+ Nigeria supported the review and revision of the policy.
- Equipping state-level family planning advocacy working groups in three states with skills to ensure long-term sustainability and build on their existing advocacy workplans to pursue increased funding for family planning.
- Providing financial support to develop state-level strategic health development plans—part of an effort to merge state-level plans into one combined plan for Nigeria, covering federal and state levels.

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