

Weaving the *Take-off* Agenda for County Health Products and Technologies Units



Learners from Kakamega and Kitui Counties treated to a session on the operations of Makueni's Directorate of Health Products and Technologies.

The Ministry of Health through the National and County Governments, with support of the USAID Afya Ugavi Activity is supporting the setting up and operations of the Division of Health Products and Technologies (HPT) at the National level and Units at Counties, to strengthen Kenya's supply chains for HIV/AIDS, malaria, family planning, and maternal and child health commodities.

This is in response to the fact that supply chain management responsibilities are often dispersed among numerous program staff, offices and locations, leading to challenges in communication and unclear pathways for making informed decisions. This leads to inefficiencies in the supply chain and, ultimately, will have a negative impact on service delivery.

The Activity supports the Kenya Health Policy 2014-2030 towards the achievement of Universal Health Care. The Activity supports the Ministry of Health to ensuring that the country and counties attain the highest possible standards of health, in a manner responsive to the needs of the population. The Activity also supports the sector's five-year strategic and investment plan for the period 2017-2022 that details key priority interventions for implementation, key being a functional Division of Health Products and Technologies at the National level and Units (or Directorates) at County respectively.

The support of the Division and Units (other counties like Makueni refer to it as Directorate) by the Activity will improve the efficacy of the multilayered supply chain process. To support the process, the Activity mandated by USAID provides technical assistance to build leadership and governance capacity for the Division and Units, starting with Kakamega and Kitui county's best practice learning trip held on the 11th to 13th of February 2020, to the already functional Makueni County Directorate of HPT.

The duo (Kakamega and Kitui) had an opportunity to know what informed the setting up of the Unit and the processes involved.

The visiting teams learned how the Makueni's Directorate of HPT operates, that is, organization, location, staffing and corresponding job-descriptions, key supply chain functions, financing and coordination with other departments.

"The learning trip divulged how the Unit has contributed to the success of Makueni County's Universal Health Care, the key factors responsible for the successful implementation of the Directorate, and challenges experienced and how they were addressed,"
Hon. Rachel Okumu, CECM – Kakamega County.

Learners were treated to a brainstorming

About Afya Ugavi

Afya Ugavi is a five-year health system strengthening activity funded by USAID under the Global Health Supply Chain – Procurement and Supply Management (GHSC-PSM) contract.

Afya Ugavi provides comprehensive technical assistance to strengthen Kenya's supply chains for HIV/AIDS, malaria, family planning, and maternal and child health commodities at both the national and county levels of the health system.

Afya Ugavi supports:

- **HIV/AIDS** activities in Kisumu, Kakamega, and Uasin Gishu counties.
- **Malaria** activities in Busia, Bungoma, Kakamega, Vihiga, Siaya, Kisumu, Homa Bay and Migori counties.
- **Family planning, maternal and child health** activities in Kisumu, Kakamega, Migori, Kitui and Uasin Gishu counties.

session which discussed the presence of a Directorate that solidifies supply chain management as a county priority because staff and resources are dedicated to these activities; which, in turn, benefits overall program planning and management. Learners were informed that the Units can be a focal point for attracting dedicated supply chain resources to identify and implement prioritized supply chain system strengthening activities.

In the case of segmented supply chains, where products for different programs may be managed differently, the Unit can provide oversight for all supply chain activities. This reducing redundancies in management processes for multiple supply chains, an aspect championed for by the duo (Kakamega and Kitui) in their Annual Work Plans.

My story...



"I was glad to join the Makueni County trip. True to my experience, if you have never tested food from another home, you will remain with the delusion that your mother is the best cook of the times – I was impressed by the Makueni County approach to Universal Health Coverage.

The Makueni County Directorate of Health Products and Technologies has an amazing organization structure with linkages to other departments, it was such an aspiration.

The trip made me acknowledge that supply chain challenges and methods applied to solve the bottlenecks are quite similar across the visiting counties.

One needs to reorganize themselves and utilize what they have as the building block for improved service delivery."

Emmanuel Kurgat, sub-County Pharmacist, Malava, Kakamega County.

Kakamega, Kitui Model Counties for Health Products and Technologies Units

The Activity believes that successful initiation of the Health Products and Technologies Unit at Kakamega and Kitui counties will be an achievement towards improving the commodity supply chain. The Units will take up the functions of organizing, monitoring, and supporting all activities within the supply chain system.

The Units will manage supply chain system activities by facilitating problem resolving and catalyzing decision making. Equally important is the Units will manage supply chain data, ensuring availability when, from the facility up to various units and partners at the county and eventually the national level.

"The Unit approach eliminates silo planning and management experienced by the multiplicity of supply chains and partners," Dr. Gakome Mwangi, sub-County Pharmacist Kitui South.

Increasing efforts are being made by the Government of Kenya to establish sustainable systems that are robust enough to respond to changes in the public health landscape. Key to building sustainable supply chain systems is recognition of and investments in the human resources and the necessary management structures required to effectively and efficiently manage these systems. The Activity envisages optimally staffed Units by the duo to ensure resources and time are dedicated to coordinating and completing supply chain activities.

Through the lens of the science of continuous improvement, the anticipated Units at Kakamega and Kitui counties will identify supply chain problems, develop solutions, advocate and undertake prospective interventions. In addition, and as part of ensuring learning from the improvement science is factored in the roll-out of the Units, the Activity continues to support the development of a Monitoring and Evaluation framework for the Division of Health Products and Technologies.

The Units at Kakamega and Kitui counties will also contribute to USAID's call of Journey to Self-Reliance, by linking stakeholders within the supply chain system to effectively and efficiently increase the range and volume of commodities managed by public sector supply chains. The Units will create a platform for the reduction in the cost of doing business in the health commodities supply chain.

Lessons learned from implementation by the model counties, from Kakamega and Kitui, will be spread to the others to seamlessly enjoin the support towards the realization of Universal Health Coverage in Kenya. The Activity is of the school of thought that an efficient and efficient supply chain management assures the citizenry access to and utilization of health services.

The creation of the Division and Units is in line with the 2010 promulgated constitution that urges reforms in the health sector, with regards to right to health, greater accountability and the implementation of the devolved structure of governance.



Photo caption: Hon. Rachel Okumu, CECM – Kakamega County expresses her appreciation to Makueni County for hosting them on learning occasion.



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