



Health Systems 20/20 Offers Assistance in Operations

Health care operations are the systems, processes, and infrastructure that support health care delivery and ensure that services and products are available in the right place at the right time for those who need care. Without effective operational systems, health programs are unlikely to deliver accessible, quality, and sustainable services and products.

Health Operations Challenges

The institutions that coordinate and deliver health care services – national and local governments, nongovernmental organizations, and private sector entities – often face endemic operational weaknesses that challenge their ability to operate efficiently and promptly to provide affordable, quality health care services and products. Common operational challenges include:

- Oversupply in some categories of health professionals and undersupply in other categories, and weak incentives to attract and retain qualified personnel;

- Weak or opaque financial management practices and systems that inadequately track and report on financial resources, hinder accountability, and impede delivery of critical health services and products;
- Inadequate procurement and inventory systems that result in lack of needed medicines, supplies, and equipment;
- Poorly designed grant management systems that limit disbursement of global funds and monitoring of recipient performance;
- Ad hoc planning and management of health programs.

What are Health Operations?

Health operations entail the planning, financial, and human resources systems, processes, and infrastructure needed to carry out health care delivery programs effectively and efficiently. They include human capital planning and supervision, financial management, policies and procedures, procurement and inventory control, and other inputs that allow health programs to be planned and managed effectively to achieve better health outcomes.

Problems encountered by existing service delivery programs show that focusing on service delivery alone often does not increase people's access to services and improve health outcomes. If the systems that support the delivery of a health program are weak, service delivery will inevitably be negatively impacted. Health operations bottlenecks are relatively easy to address through a wide range of interventions but are often neglected because they are not core health activities.



PMU/Uganda

Brief



The Health Systems 20/20 Approach

Health Systems 20/20 combines the collective knowledge, tools, and field experience of different operational disciplines to identify and address health system operations problems by developing innovative and cost-effective solutions.

Applying the Health Systems 20/20 Approach

Health Systems 20/20 works in countries around the world to improve health systems operations:

- Collaborating with Egypt's Ministry of Health and Population to develop a long-term workforce planning strategy that examines existing staffing levels and future needs, required competencies, and workforce composition characteristics;
- Implementing a human capital management program in Mozambique to strengthen incentives and working conditions to improve retention of skilled staff at the National AIDS Council;
- Helping PROSALUD, a network of health care facilities that serves 13 percent of the urban/peri-urban population in Bolivia, to strengthen its core competencies through targeted technical assistance such as developing key performance indicators;
- Assisting Mozambique's National AIDS Council to streamline the grant management system by updating financial management policies and procedures;
- Supporting the Health Insurance Organization in Egypt to strengthen its payer/purchaser functions;
- Providing technical support to strengthen the information system of Kenya's National AIDS and STI Control Program, to provide data for monitoring and evaluation of its programs.

Potential areas of health systems operations assistance include:

- Helping governments introduce tools to improve the budget process such as medium-term expenditure planning and performance budgeting to health facilities, ministries of health, and local health authorities;
- Working with governments to develop financial reporting, and asset and inventory management systems;
- Supporting distressed local health care facilities in post-conflict or disaster settings to procure supplies and equipment to make the facilities operational.

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