Evidence from health systems strengthening interventions involving pharmaceuticals reveal the importance of ensuring that essential drugs and other medical inputs are affordable and available to patients when needed.

HEALTH RESEARCH GOALS

1. Identify practical solutions through applied research

2. Synthesize, share, and promote the use of evidence

3. Develop, refine, and test tools and frameworks

PRIORIT COUNTRIES

- Afghanistan
- Bangladesh
- Democratic Republic of Congo
- Ethiopia
- Ghana
- Haiti
- India
- Indonesia
- Kenya
- Liberia
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Mali
- Mozambique
- Nepal
- Nigeria
- Pakistan
- Rwanda
- Senegal
- South Sudan
- Tanzania
- Uganda
- Yemen
- Zambia
Evidence from HSS interventions, such as health worker trainings designed to improve service delivery, shows a positive impact on quality of care and uptake of healthy behaviors.

Researchers in Uganda are investigating the overall effectiveness (including cost), field implementation processes, and provider acceptability of different knowledge management methods used to improve the quality of care related to safe male circumcision. End-line data are currently being cleaned and analyzed. Results are expected in 2016.

Goal 2: Synthesize, share, and promote the use of evidence

USAID commissioned and published a ground-breaking review of the evidence on the Impact of HSS on Health (see right). The review identified 13 types of HSS interventions with positive, quantifiable effects on health status (morbidity, mortality, etc.) and health system outcomes, including improved service provision or quality, increased service utilization, uptake of healthy behaviors, and financial protection. The findings of the report document the value of investing in HSS.

A landscape analysis was conducted on the development status of Essential Packages of Health Services for the 24 EPCMD countries to determine their progress toward universal health care and explore how government policies contribute to service, population, and financial coverage of the package. Findings indicate that all EPCMD countries have defined essential packages; however, these packages do not always include all interventions of global health priority programs, and do not always translate directly into financial protection and equitable access.

Goal 3: Develop, refine, and test tools and frameworks

Analysts are designing an operational framework to measure pharmaceutical system performance. The analysts will pilot the framework in selected EPCMD countries to make refinements, test indicators and data collection tools, and develop a manual. The framework will be used to identify priority areas for investment and to measure and demonstrate progress over time.

USAID is collaborating with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) to model the link between HSS and lives saved by developing and vetting an impact matrix, which summarizes the quantitative evidence from a comprehensive review of the literature on HSS effects on mitigating health system performance bottlenecks. In the future, this vetted matrix will be incorporated into “UNICEF’s EQUIST” tool and be applied at country level. The tool will provide the data and evidence to help policymakers and advocates articulate and quantify the health impacts of HSS activities, contributing to more evidence-based HSS investment decisions.

There is a growing need to better understand health financing and domestic resource mobilization. In the area of domestic resource mobilization, USAID is collaborating with WHO on institutionalizing national health accounts, which involves the development and use of norms, standards, and measurement tools to track health resources, as well as estimate the economic consequences of illness, the cost and effects of interventions, financial catastrophe/impoverishment, and social exclusion. These health accounts will continue to provide information regarding financial flows within the health system, which is vital for decision-making and public administration reform.

USAID is also determining how to effectively incorporate basic improvement competencies into medical education by building upon an improvement training syllabus developed in Kenya with the Ministry of Health, and by drawing on a Quality Improvement Competency Framework for pre-service education and in-service training. This work is complementary to the Medical and Nursing Education Partnership Initiatives. Products and lessons learned will be shared broadly via a virtual global forum with EPCMD countries.

This report presents a significant body of evidence linking HSS interventions to measurable impact on health for vulnerable people in low- and middle-income countries (www.hfgproject.org/impact-hss-healthy).