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KENYA

HEALTH SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING

A strong, well-functioning and sustainable health system – capable of efficiently delivering and managing health care services – is vital to improving the health status of Kenyans. In Kenya, health systems are constrained by insufficient financial resources, a shortage and poor distribution of health care workers, weaknesses in legislation and information systems, and a lack of management and other technical expertise. Accessing quality health services is especially difficult for women and youth. Strengthening the health system is at the core of the Government of Kenya’s universal health coverage agenda. USAID supported the formulation of foundational health policies, laws, and guidelines stemming from the 2010 Constitution and assists health ministries and counties to better plan, manage, and finance quality health services to meet local needs, as part of Kenya’s Journey to Self-Reliance.

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

USAID assists the Government of Kenya at the national and county levels to strengthen governance structures and functions. These efforts contribute to strengthening institutions in the health sector so that they deliver on their mandate to the people of Kenya. USAID supports development of leadership and governance curricula and access to these training courses, which cover topics such as financial management, the budget process, and sustainability in the health sector.

HUMAN RESOURCES FOR HEALTH

The World Health Organization has characterized Kenya as one of the countries facing an acute shortage of health workers. In addition, inequitable distribution and retention of health care workers remains a serious concern, particularly in regions where the need is greatest. USAID has helped build human resources for health (HRH) systems by investing in health workforce training; strengthening county HRH management systems to attract and retain high-performing health care workers; and supporting health workforce data systems for informed health workforce decision-making, planning and budgeting. USAID also contracts health workers where necessary to ensure the continuity of U.S. Government investments in service delivery, with an emphasis on regions with high disease burden and low workforce availability. The aim is to

transition the HRH systems interventions and USAID-contracted health care workers to county governments for sustainability and without affecting service delivery.

HEALTH FINANCING

The high cost of health care remains a major barrier to access, especially for the poor who spend a large share of their household income on their health care needs. A priority for health financing is to ensure that existing funds are used efficiently and better targeted to reach poor and underserved populations. USAID supports increased domestic resource mobilization for health from both the public and private sectors and improved planning and budgeting processes at the county and national level. USAID works with the Government of Kenya to develop health financing policies and strategies; supports innovative health financing approaches that target increased coverage for the poor and those lacking access to care; and supports National Hospital Insurance Fund reforms to improve sustainable and equitable financing for health services.

HEALTH PRODUCTS AND TECHNOLOGIES

The Kenyan Government has prioritized efforts to strengthen the systems for managing health products and technologies, with an emphasis on ensuring that health commodities are accessible and affordable; meet defined standards for quality, efficacy, and safety; and are appropriately utilized, reported, and accounted for. USAID has contributed to gains already made in this area by strengthening the national procurement and supply chain system, building oversight capacity for county-level supply chain systems, and strengthening local public, private, and faith-based institutions to improve impact on supply chain and commodity management.

HEALTH INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Health information systems are critical to determining the health status of Kenyans and informing effective policies and programs. USAID has aligned its own reporting needs to Kenya's performance management efforts and continues to support the Kenyan Government's health Information system. Reporting rates in the Kenya Health Information System are currently high, but data quality remains a challenge. USAID has supported the development of national training materials for the use of the Kenya Health Information System and has helped to make them accessible online, reaching a wider audience in the field. As county governments lead local data collection and decision-making, USAID continues to provide technical leadership in this area. This will enable the Government of Kenya and all other key stakeholders to access complete and accurate health information to better plan, implement, and evaluate health efforts.

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