

AccessRH

Global collaboration to improve access to reproductive health commodities

What is AccessRH?

AccessRH is an innovative procurement and information mechanism that aims to improve access to quality, affordable reproductive health (RH) commodities and reduce delivery times for low- and middle-income country government and non-governmental organization (NGO) clients. AccessRH will also expand RH supply chain visibility by offering accurate, up-to-date information on contraceptive orders and shipments for more than 140 countries worldwide through a website that is unique in the field.

The challenge

Around the world, more than 200 million women lack access to basic contraception. Often, these women must spend significant time reaching distant health centers, only to find that they are unable to access the critical contraceptive and RH supplies they need. When women and men seeking family planning services are turned away, they are unable to protect themselves from unintended pregnancies and sexually-transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS¹.

The problems underlying such supply shortages are systemic and include a lack of adequate forecasting information, unpredictable funding streams for RH commodities, and long lead times for the production of certain contraceptives and medical supplies.

An integrated effort

AccessRH was conceived through a cooperative endeavor among stakeholders across the reproductive health community to meet challenges inherent within the RH supply chain. After in-depth research and development of the initiative, the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition (RHSC) selected UNFPA to operationalize AccessRH in recognition of its role in the area of family planning and RH commodity security. The goals of this integrated effort by the reproductive health community align closely with those of MDG 5, ICPD, the Paris Declaration and Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's recently launched Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health.

Health systems strengthening

To ensure reliable management of contraceptive supplies, information needs to be shared among decision makers across supply chain functions (i.e., forecasting, advocacy, financing, procurement, manufacturing, shipment to a country's port of entry, receipt). A key feature of AccessRH is its website, which will incorporate the RHInterchange, the first and only site to provide continuously updated data on global contraceptive orders and shipments. The data contains historical information (from 2000 onwards) on over \$1 billion of contraceptives for more than 140 countries, and will allow ministries of health, NGOs, technical assistance providers, advocacy groups, manufacturers and donors to access critical information for decision making on contraceptive orders and actual monitoring of current shipments.

ICPD: The international community is urged to... establish an efficient coordination system... for the procurement of contraceptives and other commodities essential to reproductive health programmes of developing countries.

AccessRH Contribution: The AccessRH website will provide stakeholders worldwide with access to harmonized and transparent contraceptive data at the national, regional and global level.

¹ "Empty Handed: Responding to the Demand for Contraceptives". *Empty Handed*. n.d. Web. 18 Nov. 2010

Support for country-led health plans

In addition to enabling monitoring of contraceptive orders, AccessRH equips countries with several other tools to realize their reproductive health objectives and help maximize limited staff and financial resources. Through its website, AccessRH will allow clients to order multiple products offered by a variety of manufacturers at up-front prices negotiated by UNFPA, for delivery around the world. National governments, NGOs and other clients who purchase for the public sector will benefit from the pricing and quality assurance that comes with products purchased from UNFPA pre-qualified manufacturers. These tools and services will facilitate decision making and

Paris Declaration - Strengthen National Procurement Systems:
Commit sufficient resources to support and sustain medium and long-term procurement reforms and capacity development.

AccessRH Contribution: AccessRH will provide access to procurement data and UNFPA-negotiated prices so that clients can make informed procurement decisions and, if desired, select AccessRH to conduct procurement of RH commodities.

accountability at the country level and assist clients as they move along the spectrum of procurement development, providing appropriate levels of assistance as needed and value, in terms of information, finance and time, throughout.

Innovative approaches to efficient RH commodity delivery

The AccessRH model is based in part on a managed inventory of standard RH products held on UNFPA's behalf by manufacturers. This approach will address a major issue of concern to government and NGO purchasers – that of lengthy production lead times for certain commodities. UNFPA's Procurement Services Branch (PSB) will utilize demand planning (with one product in the first year of operations and then expanding to additional offerings) to maintain appropriate stock levels, thus maximizing the efficiency of the operation. PSB will also work closely with suppliers to smooth order and production volatility. By keeping items in stock, AccessRH will help to mitigate against the time constraints created by unpredictable streams of

financing. That way, when funding *does* come through, products can be shipped immediately, thereby providing more efficient delivery and preventing countries from running out of critical RH supplies.

Implementation and oversight

AccessRH will be integrated into the existing PSB structure at UNFPA. Implementation and operationalization is planned to take place over a three year period from mid 2010 to mid-2013. PSB will continue to offer its traditional procurement services for contraceptive products and other RH commodities.

AccessRH is supported by the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition and the financial backing and active engagement of the BMZ, the European Union, and in-kind support from USAID, all of whose representatives serve on the AccessRH Advisory Group.

MDG 5: *Reduce by three-quarters the maternal mortality ratio AND Achieve universal access to reproductive health*

AccessRH Contribution: Women are 70% more likely to use a modern method of contraception when there is a regular supply available. By making stocks available more quickly at the central level, AccessRH will address both MDG 5 targets.

For more information, contact:

Karina Donnelly, AccessRH Outreach Lead, Procurement Services Branch, UNFPA

Email: Donnelly@unfpa.org; Tel: +45 3546 7380



Reproductive Health
Supplies Coalition



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE