



# COVID-19 and Reproductive Health Manufacturers: *Early Findings*

21 May 2020

RHSC Manufacturers Group

Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition

# Sources of Early Findings

- Survey of members of RHSC Manufacturers Group on 28 April
- Survey of members of Coalition's Maternal Health Supplies Caucus on 14 April
- Survey of members of Coalition's Market Development Approaches Working Group (MDAWG) on 10 April
- Email exchanges between Secretariat and manufacturers

# Types of Early Findings

Impacts to manufacturers

Supply chain disruptions



Actions being taken

Mitigate the impacts



Support and coordination needed

Strengthen supply chains longer-term



# Supply chain disruptions

# Context of supply chain disruptions

Ever-changing conditions

Impacts throughout entire supply chains

Uncertainty for future planning

## Reported disruptions at point of manufacturing

Temporary shortages and delays in receiving needed quantities of API's, packaging materials, etc.

Temporary shutdowns of manufacturers' facilities, due to national lockdowns

Temporary halt to pre-shipment sampling and testing, due to lockdowns and travel restrictions

Warehouse capacity exceeded for manufacturers, due to delays in securing transportation and import permits; this can result in production stoppages

# Reported disruptions in procurement processes

Attempts by procurers to require manufacturers to abide by existing contracts and purchase orders, despite force majeure clauses and other factors

Potential deprioritizing of public sector funds away from RH supplies, due to COVID-19

Potential future delays in public tenders for RH supplies

Some procurers are moving up planned orders and procurements with manufacturers, in order to secure future supply and assist in replenishing supply chains.

# Reported disruptions to logistics/transportation

Significant delays in securing air/sea/land transportation, with longer lead-times, reduced frequencies in shipping schedules

Extreme delays in securing air transportation, depending on the destination country

Greatly increased and unpredictable costs for transportation

Delays in obtaining necessary documentation/certificates from governmental offices (e.g., destination countries)

Port closures, congestion, delays (e.g., not running at full capacity)



# Reported disruptions in destination countries

Challenges in transporting goods within the destination country, due to travel restrictions

Revised in-country distribution schedules

Potential delays in national regulatory agency processes, especially if a new production site is being presented for approval

Manufacturers' local partners for country registrations may deprioritize support for the registration, given the COVID-19 situation

Women and girls may be prevented from traveling to access RH products and services, due to travel restrictions, longer wait times, and fear of infection

Temporary closures of outlets or facilities where RH supplies are distributed/administered

Delays in product and program launches

Cancellation of trade shows and events attended by doctors and distributors, slowing the marketing of RH supplies

Postponement of in-person gatherings (e.g., trainings, community awareness-building)

Potential deprioritization of RH supplies and services by MOH staff, due to COVID-19; this may impact tenders, approvals, policy revisions, etc.



# Mitigating impacts

# Reported manufacturers' mitigation activities

## **Mitigate logistics impacts:**

- ⇒ Use of altered shipping routes
- ⇒ Use of consolidated shipments

## **Mitigate cost impacts:**

- ⇒ Assess temporary surcharges to customers, due to increased freight and inventory costs
- ⇒ Continue to invest in raw materials and inventory in order to support supply chain recovery, despite cash flow challenges related to COVID-19 situation

## **Mitigate impacts in service provision:**

- ⇒ Provide free online product-specific training and counseling sessions for healthcare providers

# Reported manufacturers' mitigation activities

## **Mitigate impacts on operations:**

- ⇒ Establish crisis response team, communicating remotely (e.g., WhatsApp) internally and with key stakeholders
- ⇒ Implement production site guidelines in response to COVID-19, entailing procedures and measures to ensure worker safety
- ⇒ Utilize workforce strategies that allow some use of work-from-home
- ⇒ Compensate workers for modified commutes (e.g., rerouting from public transit)
- ⇒ Screening for body temperature of employees and visitors at site entrances
- ⇒ Distribute to employees: hand sanitizer, hand wash soap, floor cleaner, vitamin and herbal supplements, basic food staple donation
- ⇒ Install additional hand wash basins, including at entrance to site
- ⇒ Install additional hand sanitizing stations, such as by elevators and main entrances
- ⇒ Limit third party visitors to sites, to those who are necessary and unavoidable
- ⇒ Convert internal meetings to be held virtually, via video calls



# Strengthening supply chains in short- and long-term

# Whose actions are needed in the near- and long-term to ensure access for RH supplies?

Manufacturers

Procurers

Ministries of Health

Donors

Other stakeholders

## Support supply chains at country level

Classify RH supplies as essential by MOH, for importation, transportation, and distribution

Include RH supplies and services when developing and implementing national COVID-19 response plans

As access sites and models of care are modified (e.g., self-care availability, site closures), generate awareness in communities of where/how women can access supplies and services

Because of unpredictable outlook for COVID-19, ensure adequate stock-on-hand of RH supplies; enter purchase orders accordingly (e.g., 3-6 months supply)

Perform national regulatory functions and prevent spread of counterfeit and substandard supplies

## Support supply chains at global level

Monitor in-country stock levels, prioritize purchase orders globally according to urgency, and conduct inventory transfers between countries, as needed (e.g., GFPVAN)

Develop sampling/testing strategies for emergency (e.g., lockdown) conditions

Procurers may continue to cooperate with manufacturers to implement creative strategies: avoid exceeding manufacturers' and in-country warehouse capacity, consolidate shipments, preposition supplies

Advocacy is needed at all levels to ensure attention is paid to longer-term impacts of the COVID-19 crisis

⇒ Governments will continue to shift priorities

⇒ Private sector supplies will be increasingly important





Thank you