



EXPAND COMMUNITY-BASED DISTRIBUTION OF INJECTABLE CONTRACEPTIVES IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

A CALL TO ACTION FOR COMMUNITY LEADERS

Brief

Photo credit: Louis Kreusel

Family planning helps women to space their children, giving them time to take better care of themselves, their spouse, and their children. Family planning also helps to mitigate the health risks associated with pregnancy and childbirth.

Despite the benefits of family planning, these services are not readily available in Rivers State, where only 14 percent of women use a family planning method to space or limit pregnancies.

What Has Been Done to Improve the Situation?

The Federal Government of Nigeria is committed to increasing investment in family planning and ensuring that women of childbearing age have access to their desired family planning method. In 2012, the National Council on Health approved a policy change enabling community health extension workers to administer injectable contraceptives—one of Nigeria’s most preferred contraceptive methods.¹

The Potential for Impact

This policy change provides an opportunity to reach more women with the services they desire, but the change cannot be implemented without the support of community leaders.

With assistance from the Health Policy Project, funded by the United States Agency for International Development, the White Ribbon Alliance Nigeria (WRAN) used national- and state-level data to project the impact of fulfilling the goals and interventions set in the State Strategic Health Development Plan (2010–2015). WRAN estimates that Rivers State could increase the contraceptive prevalence rate from 14.1 to 81.6 percent and the use of injectable contraceptives from 15.1 to 27 percent by 2030 if there is a sustained campaign to increase both the demand for and supply of contraceptive commodities.² The state could also avert an estimated 13,000 maternal and newborn deaths by 2030.

What You Can Do as a Community Leader

Change cannot be implemented without the voice and action of community leaders to help dispel the myths and misconceptions about family planning. WRAN is calling on community leaders in Rivers State to

- Encourage women and men in the community to use family planning methods to space their children or limit pregnancies
- Convene culturally sensitive forums to promote family planning and its benefits
- Engage with the state government and other stakeholders to establish community-based family planning service delivery points
- Speak up for family planning in the council of chiefs and elders forums

**WOMEN TAKE CARE OF THE
COMMUNITY.....
Support them to live healthier lives.**

Resources

¹ Communique: 55th National Council on Health (NCH) Meeting, Sheraton Hotel & Towers, Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, 16–20 July 2012.

² Nwachwukwu, Emeka. Unpublished, 2013. Policy Analysis of Benefits and Program Requirements of Family Planning Scale-Up in Rivers State. Abuja: White Ribbon Alliance Nigeria.

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