In the face of shrinking development resources, reaching the new FP2030 goals will require more effective and efficient family planning (FP) supply chains. Attaining these goals hinges on strengthening supply chain visibility.

You can’t manage what you can’t see: the importance of data visibility

Insufficient or incorrect data sends wrong messages through the supply chain, which results in stockouts, overstocks, expiration, wastage, and ultimately, empty hands.

Setting the foundations of supply chain visibility

For nearly two decades, the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition (the Coalition) has enhanced visibility and averted supply crises using resources that have become bywords in the community, such as the Coordinated Assistance for Reproductive Health (CARhs), Coordinated Supply Planning group (CSP), RH Interchange and Procurement Planning and Monitoring Report (PPMR). From scanning for signs of imminent stock issues to systematically tracking stock levels at central medical stores, we have successfully identified threats and reacted quickly. The Coalition has rushed deliveries, arranged product transfers, and driven new procurement. Altogether, it is estimated that our actions have generated more than $100M in cost savings and new product procurement.
Transcending silos and enhancing visibility through the VAN

Today, the Coalition continues enhancing visibility by assembling under a single umbrella all the functions formerly played by the CARhs and CSP groups, RH Interchange, and PPMR. This umbrella, known as the Global Family Planning Visibility and Analytics Network (VAN), captures data from multiple sources to improve supply chain visibility. The VAN offers the RH community a platform to assess and prioritize supply needs, communicate with one another, and act when supply imbalances loom. The VAN also links procurers, manufacturers, and countries in an active network focused on product flow into countries. Technology supports greater data capture and harmonization while overarching policies govern data sharing and use. Over time, the linkages, technology, and policies will improve how members interact and analyze data to better align country demand with production, procurement, and funding. Eventually, a well-functioning VAN will lead to more timely and cost-effective delivery of commodities; more women reached with the right product at the right time; and a better allocation of limited health resources.

What benefits can the VAN offer countries today?

If your country is already sharing inventory data through the PPMR, it is automatically eligible for Basic membership in the VAN for free. The Basic Service Package builds on the services previously provided through the PPMR (and that will be discontinued outside the VAN).

For the first time, your country will have access to near real-time updates on incoming orders and shipments and will be able to visualize and analyze the data against existing inventory and consumption data to make decisions collaboratively with your partners.

- CONTINUED technical support formatting, reviewing, and validating inventory data to share with donors and global partners.
- CONTINUED mechanism to communicate stock needs and requests (i.e., new, expedited, delayed, canceled orders) to donors and global partners to avoid stockouts.
- NEW ability to track orders and shipments coming into the country (updated daily) mapped against the country’s existing inventory and consumption data.
- NEW 24/7 access to country-specific dashboards updated automatically with new data.

The way forward

Accepting Basic membership and accessing the VAN is simple:

1. Look out for initial communication and next steps in the January-March 2021 timeframe from a key supply chain partner.
2. Identify individuals from the government and in-country supply chain players that work together on contraceptive commodity security and need access to the VAN. The PPMR data provider should be one of the individuals and involved in identification of others.
3. Log-in and accept the Terms of Use, including the Data Use Rights Table (at least one government official should log-in first).
4. Continue sharing supply data using the same PPMR form as before. No process change is required in how the data is shared. The data will automatically route into the VAN for analysis in the platform.
5. Log-in regularly to utilize the host of data and features available.

As part of the transition from PPMR and onboarding to the VAN, VAN team members will host calls with small groups of countries to orient everyone to the platform and answer any questions. VAN team members are also available for one-on-one discussions.

For more information, please contact the VAN Team: GlobalFPVAN@rhsupplies.org

Visit our website for more information here: https://www.rhsupplies.org/gfpvan