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GUYANA

CASE STUDY

Strengthening the Supply Chain



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A child at a Rural Health Center in Guyana.

“With SCMS, we have a sensitive partner...Our [supply chain] storage today is better than at any time in our country’s history...Countries like Guyana must ensure that they are building sustainable systems.”

***-Dr. Leslie Ramsammy,
Guyana’s Minister of Health***

CHALLENGE Comprehensive HIV/AIDS programs that are sustainable for the long term require a continuous inflow or supply chain of high-quality medicines and products to treat and care for people diagnosed with HIV and AIDS. This is particularly true in Guyana, where HIV/AIDS has become the number one cause of death among people ages 25 to 44, which is also the most economically active population group. In fact, since Guyana’s first case of HIV/AIDS was reported in 1987, there has been a progressive increase in the prevalence of HIV/AIDS. Today, Guyana has the second highest prevalence rate in Latin America and the Caribbean. To combat HIV/AIDS, thousands of patients, clinicians and pharmacists rely on Guyana’s supply chains to deliver essential medicines and supplies. However, the country’s basic infrastructure presents serious challenges.

INITIATIVE Until early 2006, the Ministry of Health (MOH) in Guyana had one central warehouse for health commodities, filled to capacity but partly stocked with expired medicines and products that were no longer needed. The Ministry identified the need for a modern, well-organized storage facility and enlisted support from the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. The Emergency Plan, through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), operates the Supply Chain Management System (SCMS), which is partnering with host nations to improve their ability to deliver lifesaving medicines and vital medical equipment to the front lines of the HIV/AIDS crisis. Together with SCMS, the MOH opened a new warehouse annex in July 2006. The annex provides a secure and temperature-controlled environment to store antiretrovirals, test kits, and lab supplies. In addition, staff members have been trained in warehouse management best practices and have implemented standard operating procedures. SCMS and the MOH are working together to create a seamless, reliable warehousing and distribution system for all health sector commodities.

RESULTS While efforts to improve supply chain systems are still ongoing, continuous support from the Emergency Plan’s SCMS has vastly improved Guyana’s efforts to build sustainable HIV/AIDS programs. Dr. Leslie Ramsammy, Guyana’s Minister of Health, said in a recent interview, “With SCMS we have a sensitive partner, one who understands our weaknesses and our deficiencies and helps us build on our strengths. Our storage today is better than at any time in our country’s history. More people have been trained in supply chain management. We have made progress in managing our information systems and managing our finances. SCMS has worked well with us and has contributed to these improvements in a significant way. I hope we can continue these improvements, so that when all us who are presently involved leave the system, we will leave behind a legacy – a system that is working much better. Countries like Guyana must ensure that they are building sustainable systems.”