



UPCOMING EVENTS

International Women's
Day.....March 8
Bed Net Distribution In
Ouémé.....April 23
World Malaria Day...April 25

Indoor Residual Spraying Moves to Benin's North

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All systems are ready to move the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI)/Benin's indoor residual spraying (IRS) to the country's North. After two years of successful spraying in four communes of Ouémé department in the South (around Porto-Novo, Benin's capital), where near-universal household coverage was achieved, more than 600,000 people were protected from malaria for two years. For 2011, a new area has been selected for IRS: seven communes of Atacora department. Benin's National Malaria Control Program and USAID decided to move the spraying to expand the benefits of IRS to more people in a larger geographic coverage area.

There are several differences between the North and the South of Benin. Atacora department has one major rainy season, requiring only one spraying campaign per year. Benin's South (where Ouémé is located) has a long and a short rainy season; this requires spraying campaigns twice a year. On the other hand, the North is more sparsely populated, and households are in smaller clusters in hamlets that are further apart from each other. The insecticide used in the North will be a carbamate just like the one used in the South; however, intensive monitoring will be done to ensure that the *Anopheles* mosquito that transmits malaria is still susceptible to carbamate, an insecticide previously used in the area's cotton fields.

The two years of IRS campaigns have resulted in reports of drastically reduced malaria cases in Ouémé department – up to two-thirds below pre-spraying levels. Pregnant mothers and young children are the main beneficiaries of IRS, since they are the most at risk to malaria. The current low level of malaria transmission will be maintained through universal household use of long-lasting, insecticide-impregnated mosquito nets. A distribution campaign, supported by a major behavior change communication strategy regarding mosquito net use, is planned for April 2011. ■

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