Health Workers: Vital to Family Planning and Reproductive Health

Regional Meeting of Southern and Eastern Africa Alliance of Parliamentary Committees on Health (SEAPACOEH)

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1,000,000,000 people lack access to essential care

(Source: WHO, Increasing access to health workers in remote and rural areas, 2010.)
In 2006 the WHO identified 57 countries with a health workforce crisis.
Five years later all 57 countries remain in crisis.
Sub-Saharan Africa has 25% of the global burden of disease...

but only 4% of the world’s health workers.

(Source: WHO, World Health Report, 2006.)
Flo, the beleaguered health worker

- Too few
- Inequitably distributed
- Poorly supported
- Inadequately educated
Health workers save lives.
More health workers, better health outcomes

(Source: WHO, World Health Report, 2006.)
Rural populations have less access to health workers

...which affects health outcomes

Percentage of births attended by a health professional

(Source: Demographic and Health Surveys: Ethiopia 2005; Kenya 2008-09; Rwanda 2007-08; Uganda 2008.)
...which affects health outcomes

Modern method contraceptive prevalence

(Source: Demographic and Health Surveys: Ethiopia 2005; Kenya 2008-09; Rwanda 2007-08; Uganda 2008.)
Health benefits of family planning

Reduces maternal, infant, and child mortality

Reduces abortion

Avoids high-risk pregnancies

(Sources: Conde-Agudelo 2005 and DaVanzo et al 2007; Rutstein 2005.)
Other benefits of family planning

Greater opportunities to invest in human capital (health, education)

Reduced pressure on land and water resources

Higher rates of per-capita GDP growth
High levels of unmet need

Total Family Planning Demand
Contraceptive Use and Unmet Need by Region

(Sources: Guttmacher Institute 2004; Singh, Darroch, Ashford, et al. 2009, “Adding it up”.)
Strategies for expanding FP access

- Task shifting
- Access through private sector
- Mobile or short-term services
- Increased role of community health workers
- Integrated services
Practical solutions
Solutions to the health worker crisis

Mobilize leaders
Mobilizing leaders

Malawi
Emergency HR Program

Financial incentives

Investments in local training institutions

53% increase in public-sector health workforce
Solutions to the health worker crisis

- Mobilize leaders
- Expand education
- Deploy where needed
- Strengthen management
Educating health workers

Ethiopia
Massive expansion of health extension workers

34,000 health extension workers trained

Dispatched to 15,000 health posts
Solutions to the health worker crisis

- Expand education
- Mobilize leaders
- Deploy where needed
Deploying health workers

Rwanda
Community health workers

5 community health workers in each village of 100 to 150 people

Community health workers dedicated to FP
Solutions to the health worker crisis

- Mobilize leaders
- Expand education
- Deploy where needed
- Strengthen management
Managing health workers

Kenya
Emergency Hiring Plan

Hiring system revised

Candidates applied for posts in specific areas

830 nurses placed in 200 facilities in 6 months
Solutions to the health worker crisis

- Mobilize leaders
- Expand education
- Deploy where needed
- Strengthen management
Agenda for action

Advocacy | Assets | Accountability
Don’t keep Flo waiting!