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AIDS Free
Strengthening High Impact Interventions
for an AIDS-free Generation

AIDSFree SUCCESS STORY

OCTOBER 2017

eLMIS: A Supply Chain Becomes a Lifeline

Before becoming principal pharmacist at the Ministry of Health in Lusaka, Zambia, Emmanuel Mubanga had a similar job for almost 10 years at the provincial level. He coordinated pharmaceutical services, providing technical guidance and support, for the entire province.

"I saw first-hand the challenges that people underwent to acquire medical commodities in health facilities," Emmanuel says. "We were dependent on Medical Stores Limited (MSL) to update us quarterly on whether a health facility was well-stocked or experiencing shortages.

With the launch of the electronic Logistics Management Information System (eLMIS) in November 2016, Emmanuel's frustrations ended. But he remembers clearly the "inherent weaknesses" of the old system.

Lack of Reporting 'A Great Danger'

"If a facility did not file a report with MSL, it meant that they would not have any drugs supplied during that month. The lack of reporting was a great danger to our clients, especially those who were taking life-long medications or in need of life-saving medications."

Emmanuel remembers calls he used to receive from the Ministry of Health inquiring about the availability of stock. "Often, I did not know the answer. I feared it made me inefficient in the eyes of my supervisors. It was a constant source of frustration."

The inability to collect data from district teams stemmed from multiple factors. People could be unavailable by phone or unable to respond to emails due to internet unavailability. "Although this was a situation beyond my control, it was a constant source of annoyance," Emmanuel says.



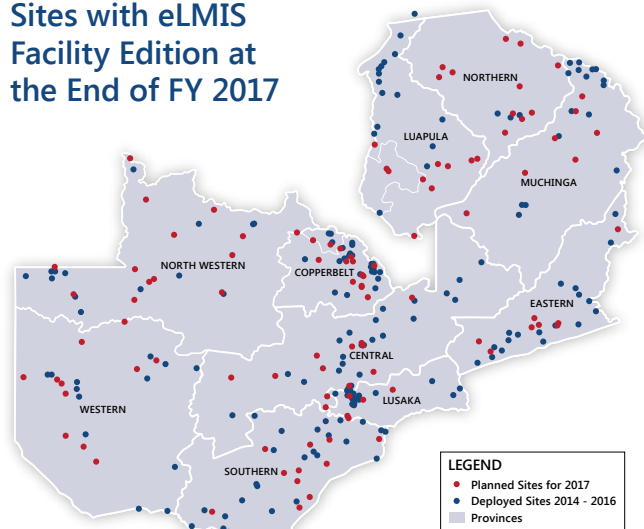
Photo: Bridget Kakuwa

Emmanuel Mubanga, principal pharmacist at the Zambia Ministry of Health.

"I saw first-hand the challenges that people underwent to acquire medical commodities in health facilities."



Sites with eLMIS Facility Edition at the End of FY 2017

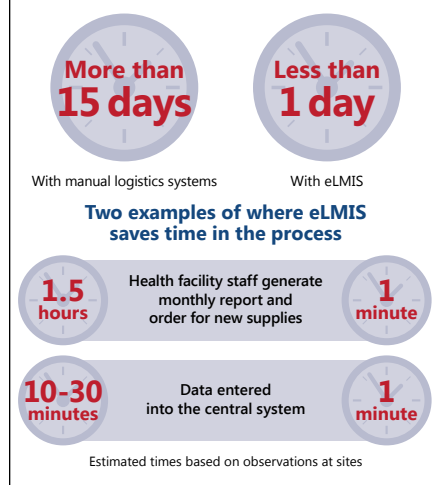


BOX 1

eLMIS is a revolutionary and cost-effective system of health data management pioneered by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health in Zambia, in partnership with the Tanzanian Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the Supply Chain Management System (SCMS), and the USAID | DELIVER PROJECT. The initiative transitioned to the Strengthening High Impact Interventions for an AIDS-free Generation (AIDSFree) Project in 2016.

During the entire life of the project, eLMIS is expected to be deployed to more than 600 Zambian facilities (Box 1). The effort supports the UNAIDS 90-90-90 goals: by 2020, 90 percent of all people living with HIV will know their HIV status, 90 percent of all people with diagnosed HIV infection will be receiving sustained antiretroviral therapy, and 90 percent of all people receiving antiretroviral therapy will have viral suppression.

Time It Takes for Health Facility Data to Reach the Central Level



BOX 2

Emmanuel is one the happiest beneficiaries of the new approach. He credits the eLMIS, for example, for helping ensure that antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) are readily available at MSL (Box 2). "eLMIS enables ARVs to be available so that clients can receive the medications on time in the facilities."

The project enables a transition from a paper-based system of data management to an electronic format to foster better, faster, and more accurate reporting of supply chain data and reduce stockouts of health commodities. eLMIS also simplifies the logistics process by reducing the time that it takes for drugs to get to the health facilities from MSL (see Box 2).

Reducing Stockouts

Emmanuel is a believer. "The eLMIS is a milestone program which has simplified the life of our health facilities staff and clients. It is a great software program that enables a health facility to see the stock levels of other facilities. So, if one facility is understocked it can identify a nearby facility which is overstocked. This way, commodities can be ferried from one facility to another without involving Medical Stores Limited."

He also notes that eLMIS can help to reduce the number of drugs that expire because a health facility can easily transfer medications to a facility which is not fully stocked.

eLMIS has given Emmanuel the ability to view all the information in one place for all the provinces. "This gives me an opportunity to see the stock levels at a national level so that I can advise provincial pharmacists accordingly. I am also able to give insights and share issues during provincial and district meetings about how best to use the system."

AIDSFree

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