



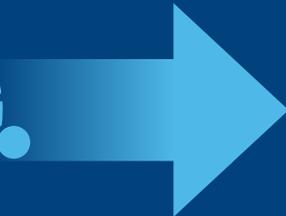
Toolkit: Expanding Access to Injectable Contraceptives through Pharmacies



Advocacy Plan



Phase 1:
Identify a core team



Phase 2:
Create an advocacy strategy

1

Establish a goal and set clear objectives

2

Assess the situation

3

Design and launch an advocacy plan for a pilot program



Phase I: Identify a core team

Establishing a core team will help you organize your advocacy efforts. Consider passionate team members with good interpersonal or facilitation skills who can engage as subject matter experts. Consider people who already have relationships with policy makers, the community, and local pharmacies. Next, assign roles to team members. Begin by identifying someone who can act as the leader of the advocacy efforts. Other specific roles should speak to the components in the advocacy strategy below. Once the team has been established and the roles have been defined, agree on regular times to meet (e.g., weekly, biweekly, or monthly) and set concrete deadlines for completing tasks. Before each meeting, confirm that the core team members are available. Working as a team can help you effectively and efficiently advocate for policy change using the steps outlined on the next page.



Phase 2: Create an advocacy strategy

Once the core team is formed, begin preparing for advocacy efforts. Meet regularly to create an advocacy strategy and discuss progress and challenges.

Follow these key steps to create an advocacy strategy:

Step 1: Establish a goal and set clear objectives

- Create two or three concrete and realistic short-term objectives that will help move you towards your long-term goal.

Step 2: Assess the situation

- **Familiarize yourself with the regulatory environment and the process for changing policy.** Acquaint yourself with your country's most up-to-date policy concerning the administration of injectables by pharmacies. Your country might have a policy that explicitly prohibits the practice or there might not be a policy at all. If the information is not readily accessible, request it from the ministry of health. Also, learn more about what it takes to change policy to allow the practice in your country. A conversation with ministry of health officials is one way to start.
- **Identify advocacy audiences.** Conduct a stakeholder mapping exercise—a collaborative process that involves research and discussion to determine a list of stakeholders—to identify key decision makers and influencers to whom you need to make your case. Identify primary and secondary audiences. Primary audiences include decision makers with the authority to approve policy changes. Secondary audiences are the individuals and groups that can influence the decision makers (the primary audience), such as representatives from on-the-ground international organizations, community leaders, professional associations, program managers, religious leaders, community service organizations, NGOs, and the media. Consider including oppositional forces as a secondary audience; then learn more about them and address them in your advocacy strategy.
- **Research your audience.** Conduct interviews or focus group discussion to learn more about what your audience's interests and priorities are. This will help you tailor your communications to these individuals and make your messages more compelling. Consider segmenting your audience into subgroups with similar characteristics, such as (1) policy makers, (2) pharmacists, (3) consumers (the general community), and (4) commodities/supply chain manufacturers.
- **Collect evidence that can be used to support your advocacy objectives.** Ground your advocacy messages in your country's FP2020 commitments and the Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goal 3 (good health and well-being), and collect evidence to show how task sharing will help achieve these goals. Gather data from the Demographic and Health Survey on the unmet need for contraceptives and the private sector health-seeking behavior in your country. As there is very little direct experience with pharmacies administering injectable contraceptives, draw on the experiences of other cadres like community health workers and drug shops. See the toolkit's **Evidence and Resource Guide** for more information.



Step 3: Design and launch an advocacy plan for a pilot program

Using the information collected in steps 1 and 2, design and launch an advocacy plan that outlines specific actions leading up to policy change, and actions that will be needed after the policy change. Please note that the advocacy plan should consider your country's laws and policies.

- **Design the plan.** For each objective established in step 2, consider the following questions:
 - *What activities are needed to meet this objective?*
 - *What is a realistic timeline?*
 - *Which team member is responsible for each activity?*
 - *What resources do you need? How much will this cost?*
 - *What stakeholders or groups could help you?*
 - *What are the anticipated outcomes?*
- **Create key messages and a communications plan.** Create appropriate key messages for each target group. Consider the following questions and issues as you develop your key messages:
 - What type of messages resonate most effectively across the four groups (or more, depending on your country)?

For example, for pharmacists, provide evidence that having a new commodity to sell will increase profits, and that access to this commodity can help women and their families in the pharmacist's community.
 - How will the messages about task sharing for injectables be disseminated, and by whom? Who is the appropriate communicator?
 - What kinds of resources are needed to communicate effectively with each group? For example, do you need PowerPoint presentations, posters, in-person meetings, community mobilization activities, scholarly evidence?
 - What happens if the key messages don't work?
 - Remember that barriers may arise.
 - **Anticipate resistance from other service delivery providers:** Other providers might not be comfortable with task sharing, so be prepared to advocate to them, as well. Share data on your country's unmet need and existing health-seeking behavior. Provide data that shows that clients are already seeking methods and care from pharmacies. Remind them that task sharing is about alleviating strain on the health system and expanding access to family planning. Consider including success stories (from other cadres) or testimonials from pharmacists and their clients. If possible, see if they can accompany you to a meeting to give their testimonial in person. If appropriate, consider ways to involve service delivery providers in your advocacy efforts.



- **Anticipate concerns over abuse of the practice:** Prepare for people's likely perception that the new skill will lead to pharmacists administering all types of injections. Develop a plan for how your association can work with regulators to prevent potential abuse of the practice. Consider developing suggestions for ways to enhance existing quality assurance mechanisms. This will help assure policy makers and other stakeholders that there will be no abuse in administering other injections beyond injectable contraceptives.
- **Anticipate what may be required after a policy change:** Consider how training guidelines, social marketing approaches, consumer mobilization, quality assurance measures, and routine monitoring and evaluation reporting will need to be developed. Consider how your association can assist the government with oversight and data collection.