

Toolkit: Expanding Access to Injectable Contraceptives through Pharmacies



Introduction

Millions of women around the world who want to avoid getting pregnant are not using family planning methods. Across the 69 FP2020 focus countries, one in five married women of reproductive age have an unmet need for modern contraceptive methods (FP2020 2016). With public sector facilities a less desirable source for contraceptives due to distance, long wait times, stock outs, and other factors, more than 106 million women turned to the private sector to obtain contraceptives in 2016 (Weinberger and Callahan 2017). Pharmacies and drug shops—a large portion of the private health sector in many countries—are especially important to family planning users: 40 percent of women who use modern contraceptives obtained their method from these sources (Weinberger and Callahan 2017).

One of the barriers that keeps people from accessing quality family planning services is a shortage of health care workers in their country. Task sharing, or the sharing of certain responsibilities among health workers of various levels, is a promising strategy for countries facing this issue. The World Health Organization's (WHO) guidance for task sharing recommends that injectable contraceptives be administered by pharmacists. It adds that trained pharmacy workers may also provide injections, if they are directly supervised by a pharmacist (WHO 2017).

Despite these recommendations, pharmacists in many countries are unable to administer injectable contraceptives due to policies that prohibit pharmacists and medicine sellers from providing “medical services,” which includes the administration of injectable contraceptives. This misalignment between WHO and country policies presents an opportunity to advocate for an expanded scope of practice for pharmacists.

How to use this toolkit

This toolkit contains resources designed to help pharmacy associations become effective advocates and

begin working to change policies in their countries. As representatives for professional pharmacists, pharmacy associations are ideal champions for appropriate policy changes. This toolkit can be adapted to advocate for any injectable contraceptive, including subcutaneous depo-medroxyprogesterone acetate (DMPA-SC). It includes:



An **infographic** to distribute to pharmacists and stakeholders to promote efforts



A **frequently asked questions** resource to help answer common questions



An **advocacy plan** to help plan advocacy efforts



An **evidence and resource guide** containing references to help make the case for policy changes



A **resource for considering DMPA-SC**



A **PowerPoint template** to use to make presentations to key stakeholders

References:

Family Planning 2020. FP2020: The Way Ahead, 2016–2017.

Weinberger, M. and S. Callahan. 2017. *The Private Sector: Key to Achieving Family Planning 2020 Goals*. Brief. Bethesda, MD: Sustaining Health Outcomes through the Private Sector Project, Abt Associates.

World Health Organization. 2017. *Task Sharing to Improve Access to Family Planning/Contraception*. Geneva: WHO.