

Fact Sheet: Essential Supplies for Postabortion Care

WITHOUT SUPPLIES, THERE ARE NO SERVICES

Access to high-quality, timely postabortion care (PAC) services can mean the difference between life and death for many women in the developing world. A clinic's ability to provide PAC services relies on a consistent stock of essential supplies.

Although PAC commodities are fundamentally necessary to the provision of quality services, ensuring their availability is often challenging, for multiple reasons. The following details must be considered in all stages of PAC program design and policy development.

LIST OF ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES FOR PAC

- **Manual Vacuum Aspiration (MVA) equipment**
- **Misoprostol** (200 mcg tablets)
Both MVA and misoprostol are safe and effective methods of treating incomplete abortion and are especially appropriate in low-resource settings.
- **Medications for pain management**
The management of pain from incomplete abortion might include offering NSAIDs, analgesics, or local anesthesia.
- **Contraceptives**
A variety of contraceptive options should be available to meet women's individual family planning needs at the time of services.
- **Consumables and equipment**
Gloves and infection prevention supplies are some examples of consumables necessary to ensure safe PAC services.

KEY ELEMENTS TO SECURING PAC SUPPLIES

A steady supply of commodities for quality PAC services depends upon a diverse network of actors who keep the supply chain moving effectively and efficiently. Key elements of PAC supply security include:

- **Strong supply chains** with good data availability, defined responsibilities, and clear procedures for forecasting, ordering, and reporting
- **Adequate infrastructure for logistics management**, to ensure properly functioning systems
- **Flexible procurement systems** with short lead times and reliable data, to facilitate forecasting and prevent shortages and overstocks
- **Robust quality assurance systems** to ensure high-quality PAC supplies and services

CHALLENGES TO SECURING PAC SUPPLIES

PAC program managers must carefully consider possible barriers to supply security when designing programs, to both prevent and anticipate avoidable problems. Issues may arise at any point along the supply chain, compromising a provider's ability to deliver quality PAC services. Major challenges to securing PAC supplies include:

- **The number and diversity of supplies required** results in many supply-specific barriers that cannot be addressed with one single solution.
- **Critical staffing shortages and high client loads** may mean that monitoring PAC commodities is not prioritized.
- **Insufficient and inconsistent funding** for PAC programs and different sources of funding for each supply complicate program sustainability.
- **A lack of prioritization at the policy level** affects resources for PAC related supplies.
- **Stigma around PAC** may add to barriers at all levels.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUPPLIES-RELATED PAC PLANNING

PAC supplies have security needs that must be addressed at all levels within a country's health system and should be incorporated into:

- Policies, guidelines, and training curricula
- Resource mobilization and advocacy strategies
- Program planning, budgeting, and implementation processes
- Monitoring and evaluation systems

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Ensure a rigorous logistics management information system is in place** for monitoring inventory, expiration dates, and lifespan of related equipment, to facilitate accurate forecasting and avoid waste or stock-outs. Incorporate PAC supplies into existing systems, when possible.
- **Simplify supply chains** where possible, utilizing one main, quality supplier for each major PAC commodity, with a back-up option for emergencies. Depending on the commodity, this may include a variety of suppliers, such as commercial distributors and social marketing agencies.
- **Establish protocols for procurement** to ensure competitive pricing, quality products, and timely delivery.
- **Coordinate complementary programs** to ensure that a broad selection of contraceptives, including long- and short-acting methods, is available to PAC patients at time of service.
- **Train PAC staff on relevant concepts of logistics management**, such as ordering, forecasting, inventory management, and storage.
- **Include the private sector in program planning** and develop public-private partnerships, where appropriate and feasible.
- **Document and disseminate supply logistics successes and lessons learned** for dissemination to national stakeholders and to other clinics.
- **Ensure that there is a mechanism for providers to maintain competence** and currency in PAC knowledge, skills, and attitudes for quality practice.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Ensure that PAC supplies are included on the national agenda** by joining an existing national-level commodity security working group or committee, or by establishing one if none exists.
- **Advocate for inclusion of PAC supplies funding** into program budgets.

- **Advocate for inclusion of PAC supplies** on each country's essential drug and equipment lists.
- **Advocate for inclusion of PAC supplies** in each country's existing public health commodity supply system.

SELECTED RESOURCES

Below is a list of selected resources related to PAC supplies. Please visit web sites provided for additional tools and information.

USAID|DELIVER Project: *deliver.jsi.com*

Quantification of Health Commodities: A Guide to Forecasting and Supply Planning for Procurement
Logistics Handbook: A Practical Guide for the Supply Chain Management of Health Commodities
Logistics Indicators Assessment Tool

RH Supplies Coalition: *rhsupplies.org*

Supplies Information Database

RHInterchange

Advocacy Guide and Toolkit: leading voices in reproductive health supplies

Forecasting Guide for New and Underused Methods

Management Sciences for Health: *msh.org*

The Family Planning Manager's Handbook

Ipas: *ipas.org*

Stocking Facilities with MVA Equipment According to Caseload

MVA Sustainable Supply Workbook

MA Supply Guidance

Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health, USAID and UNFPA: *k4health.org/toolkits*

Strategic Pathway to Reproductive Health Commodity Security: A Tool for Assessment, Planning, and Implementation (SPARHCS)

UN Commission on Life Saving

Commodities: *Everywomaneverychild.org*

Implementation Plan

The Postabortion Care (PAC) Consortium increases awareness and action in the reproductive health community about the need to effectively treat complications of miscarriage and incomplete abortion in order to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity, and to promote PAC as an effective strategy to improve public health. Established in 1993, the PAC Consortium is a global network of more than 150 organizations and hundreds of individuals. Individually and in collaboration, the PAC Consortium member agencies implement postabortion care programs around the world, and also encourage technical agencies, governments and donors to incorporate PAC into their own programs and policies as a critical step toward reducing deaths and injuries related to miscarriage and abortion-related complications.

To learn more, visit pac-consortium.org.