PROMESS warehouse in Port-au-Prince

PROMESS
PROGRAM FOR ESSENTIAL MEDICINES AND SUPPLIES

PROMESS, the National Center for the Supply of Essential Medicines, was created in 1992 and operates under PAHO/WHO technical and managerial leadership. It is located near the Port-au-Prince airport and is evidence of the concerted effort by many national and international partners to improve access to quality essential medicines and medical supplies in Haiti. Materials and financial contributions are donated by:

- The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF),
- The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA),
- The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and
- The Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development (AECID)

PROMESS plays a vital role in the storage and distribution of medicines and health supplies nationwide. PAHO/WHO coordinates its actions with the Ministry of Public Health and Population (MSPP as per its acronym in French), and the Organization has supported the MSPP to establish a national medical supply system and a National Pharmaceutical Commission for regulatory purposes. Despite the many challenges, efforts have been made towards:

- Consolidating PROMESS as the Central Medical Stores to stock and distribute medicines and medical supplies to health institutions, strengthening the national medical supply and distribution system.
- Promoting the rational use of medicines.
- Strengthening the national regulatory capacity of the MSPP.
- Developing a political and regulatory framework for medical supplies and pharmaceutical products.

Careful coordination with a wide variety of partners has been essential during the emergency immediately after the earthquake and during the cholera outbreak of 2010. PROMESS has ensured the distribution of essential medicines, medical supplies, and cholera beds as well as specific supplies requested by the WASH and Logistics Clusters.

Many countries have contributed medical supplies since the earthquake: Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Italy, Japan, Spain, United States.

Activities carried out:

Even with the additional focus on specific supplies and materials for cholera, at no point did PROMESS ever interrupt its non-cholera activities. PROMESS has continued normal operations throughout 2010. Requests for medicines and supplies from NGOs, partner health institutions and PAHO/WHO supported national programs (tuberculosis, vaccination, reproductive health, free obstetrical care project, among others) are met as soon as they are received.

PAHO/WHO Haiti Country Office staff are currently working at the PROMESS premises, since the PAHO/WHO office building was damaged by the earthquake in 2010. As of March 2011, a total of 130 staff are working to implement PAHO/WHO's technical cooperation program, many in Port-au-Prince and some deployed in Haiti's ten Departments.

Distribution of medicines and medical supplies and stock management:

- In 2010, medicines and medical supplies valued at US$ 13 million were distributed, free of charge.
- PROMESS continues to handle requests from over 430 partners including NGOs and different institutions.
- Using WHO Good Practices for Distribution of Supplies, Operational Standard Procedures were developed.
- Provision of technical support for the evaluation of MSPP Departmental Supply Centers (*Centres Départementaux d'Approvisionnement en Intrants* – CDAIAs).
- Preparation and dissemination of pharmaceutical management tools at the departmental level.
- Training on pharmaceutical inspections and stock management.

Distribution of medicines and medical supplies for cholera response:

- Distribution of over US$ 3 million in medical supplies to treat 70,000 severe cases and 130,000 moderate cases of cholera. As of March 2011, PROMESS has enough medical supplies to support Cholera Treatment Centers (CTC), Cholera Treatment Units (CTU) and the activities at the community level for the rest of 2011. A large order of Oral Rehydration Salts is arriving in a series of shipments, providing ample support for the community awareness programs.
- Construction and distribution of 2,000 cholera beds.

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Activities carried out: (continued)

- Medical supplies were distributed throughout the different Departments of Haiti directly to health institutions in many cases (60%) and indirectly in others (40%) with the support of different partners. As of March 2011, more than 600 tons and 1500 cubic meters of medical supplies were distributed by the PAHO/WHO logistics team since. There are a total of 12 MSPP warehouses, and an additional eight storage units managed by PAHO/WHO used to maintain emergency inventories. These are located in: Gonaives, St Marc, Cap Haitien, Jérémie, Miragoane, Les Cayes, Jacmel, and Léogane.
- Coordination with different partners to share information on stocks of supplies nationwide. To this end, an electronic platform was created, which can be found at www.paho.org/promess. Partners participating in this platform: MSPP (CDAI), UNICEF, US Safe Motherhood and Child Survival (SCMS), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Partners in Health, AMERICARES.
- PROMESS is carefully monitoring stocks in MSPP warehouses outside of Port-au-Prince as well as emergency stocks being managed by PAHO/WHO teams in the field.
- Management of the LSS/SUMA (Logistics Supply Management System) to track and process supplies and incoming donations.
- Rapid response to urgent alerts received through the Health Cluster.
- A contingency plan has been developed to maintain continuous distribution of medical supplies throughout the upcoming rainy season.

Challenges and next steps:

- Continue to support national authorities to establish a national pharmaceutical policy with three priority lines of action:
    1. Access to essential medicines
    2. Rational use of medicines
    3. Strengthening the capacity of the national regulatory authority for medicines
- Continue to strengthen periphery warehouses, with adequately trained human resources and with information technology and communication systems.
- Continue to mobilize financial resources to ensure availability of essential medicines and supplies and their distribution nationwide.