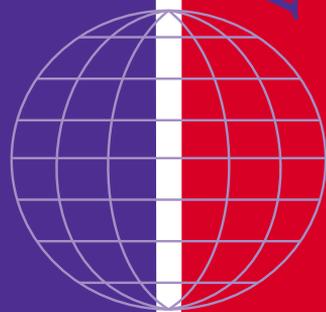


Contraceptive Security

Ready Lessons II

Overview



Contraceptive Security in a Changing Global Health Environment



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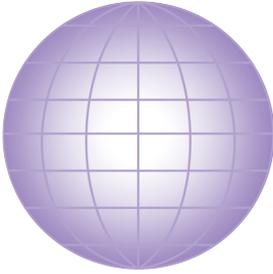
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Contraceptive Security

Ready Lessons II



In the changing global health environment, developing multi-stakeholder commitment is vital to improving contraceptive security.

What Can a Contraceptive Security Champion Do?

- **Emphasize that family planning, and contraceptive security in particular, are important for accelerating progress to meet the Millennium Development Goals, including reducing HIV prevalence, maternal and child mortality, and poverty.**
- **Build commitment to contraceptive security among key stakeholders from the public, NGO, and private sectors using evidence about the benefits of family planning.**
- **Support the creation and ongoing work of a contraceptive security committee to ensure coordination amongst donors, government, and the private sector.**
- **Support a national assessment of contraceptive security to define barriers to contraceptive access and identify possible solutions through the public, private, and NGO sectors.**
- **Support development and implementation of a national strategic plan for improving contraceptive security, taking advantage of national and local level commitment.**

- **Leverage the commitment from all sectors to mobilize sufficient resources for procurement, distribution, and provision of needed contraceptives and condoms.**
- **Stay apprised of changes in the global health architecture and identify ways to address family planning (FP)/reproductive health (RH) needs through other programs and funding sources.**
- **Ensure that the national program attends to the contraceptive method needs of all clients — especially those with limited access — by providing a wide range of contraceptive methods.**
- **Emphasize contraceptive security throughout health sector reform processes; for example, when Ministries of Health integrate programs and systems and when decision-making authority is devolved from central to local levels.**

How to Use *Ready Lessons* and *Ready Lessons II*

Ensuring contraceptive security requires the attention and action of multiple stakeholders — governments, donors, private sector organizations, and the community — on a complex array of issues. *Contraceptive Security: Ready Lessons II* builds on the 2003 *Contraceptive Security: Ready Lessons* to provide new and veteran champions of contraceptive security with strategies and activities that, when implemented successfully, can significantly improve the ability of people to access the contraceptive methods and condoms they want. *Ready Lessons* introduced the fundamentals of programming for contraceptive security. *Ready Lessons II* shows how to apply these basics in the context of a rapidly changing health environment, including changes in development assistance, health sector reforms, and growth of the private sector. This overview introduces the challenges and opportunities posed by these changes and then expands on the commitment that is needed from stakeholders to address the challenges and capitalize on the opportunities to advance contraceptive security.

Contraceptive security exists when people are able to choose, obtain, and use high quality contraceptives and condoms whenever they want them for family planning and HIV/AIDS/STI prevention.

The Importance of Contraceptive Security for Improving Health and Reducing Poverty

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set targets for health and poverty that help harmonize the efforts of the international development community. While access to family planning is not itself an explicit target, family planning provides documented benefits for several goals. Access to contraceptives is critical to reaching the MDG #6 target of reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS. Condoms are the only method that reliably prevents sexual transmission of HIV. All contraceptives, by reducing unwanted pregnancies, limit mother-to-child transmission of HIV. Access to contraceptives also has a direct impact on MDG #5, to reduce maternal mortality by three quarters, and MDG #4, to reduce child mortality by two-thirds. By enabling families to choose the timing and spacing of pregnancies, which significantly reduces both maternal and child mortality, improving access to contraceptives is a highly cost-effective intervention for addressing these difficult MDG targets. Family planning also has a significant impact on MDG #1, eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, by reducing family size and thus increasing per capita family income. Beyond these direct effects, the reduction in population growth that results from voluntary access to contraceptives eases economic stress on governments for financing education, health, and environment programs. Thus, access to contraceptives is a critical and cost-effective means of improving progress to meet the MDGs — and other national and international commitments for improving health and reducing poverty.

Changing Global Health Architecture

The international and national architecture for global health is rapidly changing in ways that make strengthening contraceptive security an increasingly difficult challenge. Donor attention and resources are becoming more focused on battling specific infectious diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis, reducing the attention of donors and governments to family planning and reproductive health programs. Meanwhile, donors increasingly provide financial support to governments through basket funding or direct budgetary support, thus giving greater ownership and autonomy over spending to governments. Governments are expected to rapidly assume new responsibilities for contraceptive security, even though they may lack sufficiently strong capacity or systems to meet those responsibilities. In many countries — especially in Latin America, Eastern Europe, and East Asia — donors are phasing out support for family planning programs specifically or for health programs generally due to the significant achievements of those programs and/or the increased financial resources of governments. These countries must now take the responsibility for developing and implementing programs to sustain and enhance previous gains.

In addition, many countries are engaging in health sector reforms that affect the prospects for contraceptive security. Principal among these are integration and decentralization of logistics systems. *Ready Lesson II #10: Working within an Integrated Supply Chain* discusses the challenges to contraceptive security as contraceptives are integrated with other essential drugs in a single logistics system, and describes the steps that governments and partners should take to ensure that reform does not compromise contraceptive availability. Meanwhile, the private sector is playing a greater role in providing health services and commodities, as discussed in *Ready Lesson II #7: Fostering Public-Private Collaboration for Improved Access*. To capitalize on this important contribution, key organizations in the public, NGO, and commercial sectors must coordinate effectively so that the demands for family planning commodities among all sectors of market can be better fulfilled. In the absence of coordination, different actors can find themselves competing to reach limited segments of the market while other potential clients remain underserved.

While changes in the health sector can pose challenges, they also offer new opportunities that can be leveraged to improve contraceptive security. The greater role of governments in determining how to use funds for health programs means that targeted advocacy by contraceptive security champions

In Kenya, contraceptive security champions successfully advocated to include an indicator for the percent of women of reproductive age receiving family planning commodities in the national health SWAp, thus helping to assure that family planning and the contraceptive logistics system receive the required attention and commitment from policy makers.

can significantly influence health strategies. Strategic documents written by governments and partners to articulate health goals, such as Sector Wide Approaches (SWAps) and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), provide concrete targets for advocacy efforts (see *Ready Lesson II #6: Mobilizing*

Financial Resources). Integration of logistics systems provides an opportunity to ensure the sustainability of contraceptive security, by managing contraceptives through a well-functioning system that serves a range of public health needs. Moreover, the increased role of the private sector creates excellent opportunities to mobilize additional resources for contraceptive security, while more efficiently meeting the needs of all contraceptive users.

Commitment to Contraceptive Security

Meeting the challenges and seizing the opportunities presented by changes in the broader global health environment require, first and foremost, a broad-based commitment to favorable policies for contraceptive security. To be fully effective, commitment to contraceptive security requires understanding the complexity of policy decisions and actions that impact contraceptive security.

Commitment to contraceptive security will be expressed both through broad, national-level policies and operational policies that assist in implementing pieces of a contraceptive security strategy. Sustained commitment to monitoring and improving conditions in the following specific areas is vital to contraceptive security:

- **Legal and Regulatory Environment:** Governments can be either enablers or disablers of contraceptive security through their legal and policy-making bodies. From policies that address institutional biases for certain methods to those that reduce regulatory barriers for registration of new products, all aspects of the health system require policies that create an enabling environment for contraceptive availability and choice.
- **Financial Resources:** Contraceptive security requires financial commitments from stakeholders. Donors are taking advantage of new mechanisms to deliver assistance that can be used for contraceptive security, including sector-wide approaches, poverty reduction strategy plans and credits, and multilateral and foundation organizations. More than ever before, developing country governments are mobilizing their own resources to ensure their family planning programs are adequately supplied. Governments can also leverage private sector resources by promoting a policy environment that fosters private sector involvement in family planning (see *Ready Lesson II #6: Mobilizing Financial Resources*).
- **Whole Market Approach:** Government commitment to contraceptive security recognizes the importance of sharing the provision of contraceptives and family planning services with a variety of partners. By dividing the market in a rational manner among the various sectors — public, commercial, private non-profit — duplication of effort is avoided and the government may focus its resources on serving those who cannot access the other sectors (see *Ready Lesson I #3: Taking a Whole Market Approach* and *Ready Lesson II #7: Fostering Public-Private Collaboration for Improved Access*). A government's commitment is implemented in part by acting as a steward for effective coordination and by supporting policies that encourage a greater role for the private sector and facilitate segmenting the market based on people's ability to pay. The other sectors must also commit to the whole market approach, and adhere to and fulfill their identified roles.
- **Equity:** Significant increases in the use of contraceptives has focused new attention on reaching underserved populations — men and women who, due to a variety of factors, have inadequate access to their preferred methods of contraceptives and condoms. Governments, in particular, must commit to addressing the needs of the

underserved, either directly or through contracted agencies, as these populations typically have greatest need for targeted and subsidized products and services (see *Ready Lesson II #9: Reaching the Underserved*).

- **Commodities and Supply Chain:** A commitment by governments to ensuring a continuous, reliable supply of FP commodities, equipment, and supplies is essential to contraceptive security. This commitment must go beyond providing funds for procurement. It must also support a well-functioning supply chain system that keeps service delivery points stocked.
- **Choice of Methods:** The ability of clients to choose the contraceptive method that best suits their needs is an explicit component of contraceptive security. Governments should ensure that all service delivery sites have the supplies and equipment required to provide family planning methods that fit different needs and preferences. Available methods should include natural and clinical methods, short-acting, long-acting and permanent methods, and methods which are both client-controlled and provider-dependent. To provide sufficient choice and meet the needs of clients, policy makers often must commit to increasing the availability of methods that are underutilized (see *Ready Lesson II #8: Expanding Contraceptive Choice by Supporting Underutilized Methods*).
- **Service Delivery Systems:** Women and men cannot make informed choices about contraceptive methods if they do not have access to skilled service delivery providers. These providers must have all the commodities, equipment, and supplies needed to provide the full range of available methods, or be able to refer clients to appropriate service delivery sites for those methods that they can't provide. In addition, they must communicate to the client the distinct characteristics of each method, assess whether the method is medically appropriate for the client, and — in the case of provider-dependent methods — have the required skills and confidence to provide the method in a manner that meets quality service standards.

Strategies to Achieve Commitment

A concerted effort is required to develop and sustain the needed commitment to contraceptive security amongst key stakeholders. Various activities can raise awareness amongst stakeholders about the benefits of ensuring contraceptive security, as well as the programmatic needs for improving contraceptive availability (see *Ready Lesson I #1: Raising Awareness and Commitment*). These strategies bolster each other and should be used together to create a supportive environment for contraceptive security — placing contraceptive security high on policy agenda and building high-level commitment.

A key to winning commitment for contraceptive security is to educate stakeholders about the many **benefits of contraceptive security**, including reduced maternal and infant mortality, reduced HIV/STI transmission, and fewer unwanted pregnancies and abortions.

diagnose key barriers to contraceptive access, benefits to be reaped from improving access, and the potential roles of various stakeholders in addressing those barriers (see *Ready Lesson I #2: Doing a Joint Assessment*). The joint assessment should lead to prioritization of needs, strategic planning, and program implementation by all stakeholders involved. Stakeholders can use data from a joint assessment and/or other sources to recruit new champions for contraceptive security (see *Ready Lesson I #5: Using Data for Decision Making*). The SPARHCS Tool (Hare et al. 2004) and Process Guide (Rao et al. 2008) provide guidance on how to customize assessments and planning for contraceptive security.

- **Joint Assessment:** The first step in raising awareness and concern about contraceptive security within a country is often for stakeholders to jointly carry out an assessment to
- **Contraceptive Security Committees:** The creation of an active interagency coordination committee for contraceptive security is another critical step in developing support for contraceptive security (see *Ready Lesson I #1: Raising Awareness and Commitment*). The contraceptive security committee takes the lead in developing national contraceptive security strategic plans and supporting their implementation. Contraceptive security committees can coordinate stakeholder engagements, advocate for resources, promote legal and market reform, support the creation of incentives for the private sector, and develop and prioritize interventions that address issues identified in joint assessments.
- **Civil Society Advocacy:** Advocacy by informed civil society groups and non-governmental organizations can be instrumental in attaining commitment to contraceptive security from previously inattentive governments. Women's groups, non-profit service delivery organizations, and others dedicated to reproductive health are often well-positioned to educate and advocate with the legislative and executive branches of government using evidence-based arguments about the importance of contraceptive security.
- **Media Advocacy:** Traditional and new forms of media can be utilized to inform the public about the benefits of family planning and contraceptive security, and to mobilize support for policy makers to commit to improve the availability of family planning products and services (see *Ready Lesson I #4: Advocating for Sustained Commitment*).

- **Planning and Implementation:** Securing contraceptives for a country requires strategic planning and focused attention to implementation of policies and plans. When a country or group of stakeholders declare commitment to contraceptive security, those entities should devise a strategy for achieving contraceptive security that identifies specific policies, procedures, implementers, and costs.

The road to achieving contraceptive security is long and complex. When local actors are aware of the broad array of high impact benefits that family planning can provide, and the necessity of making contraceptive methods accessible in order to achieve those benefits, they can generate the multi-sectoral commitment that is needed to improve contraceptive security. The tools, approaches, and strategies discussed in *Ready Lessons* and *Ready Lessons II* have been developed to support contraceptive security champions in their efforts to translate this commitment into action.

Further Reading

Contraceptive Security: Ready Lessons. Overview and Lessons 1-5. 2003. Baltimore, MD.: Information and Knowledge for Optimal Health (INFO) Project, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. <http://www.maqweb.org/otherpubs.shtml>

Hare, L., Hart, C., Scribner, S., Shepherd, C., Pandit, T. (ed.), and Bornbusch, A. (ed.). 2004. *SPARHCS: Strategic Pathway to Reproductive Health Commodity Security. A Tool for Assessment, Planning, and Implementation.* Baltimore, MD.: Information and Knowledge for Optimal Health (INFO) Project, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. <http://www.maqweb.org/sparhcs/>

Rao, R., Olson, N., Pilz, K. (ed.), and Bornbusch, A. (ed.). 2008. *The SPARHCS Process Guide: A Planning Resource to Improve Reproductive Health Commodity Security.* Baltimore, MD: Information and Knowledge for Optimal Health (INFO) Project, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. <http://www.maqweb.org/sparhcs/>

Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition resources on contraceptive security: <http://www.rhsupplies.org>

The Supply Initiative. Why reproductive health supplies are crucial to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Belgium: The Supply Initiative; 2005. http://www.populationaction.org/Publications/Fact_Sheets/RHSC/MDGs.pdf

USAID technical resources on contraceptive security: http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/global_health/pop/techareas/contrasecurity

The USAID Commodities Security and Logistics Division works to advance contraceptive security by providing global technical leadership and support to country programs in research and analysis, strategic planning, program design and implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.

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