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**Assuring Quality Health Care
through Social Health Protection**
The Role of Purchasing and Quality Management
31 October - 2 November 2007, Kigali Rwanda



gtz



International Labour Office
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
World Health Organization



Rwanda Ministry of Health

Rwanda Ministry of Health and the GTZ-ILO-WHO Consortium
Conference Announcement:

Assuring Quality Health Care through Social Health Protection
The Role of Purchasing and Quality Management

31 October to 2 November 2007 in Kigali, Rwanda

The GTZ-ILO-WHO Consortium and the Rwanda Ministry of Health are convening a conference addressing issues of Social Health Protection and Quality Health Care.

Objective of the conference

The objective of the conference is to inform the development of policies and strategies for achieving quality in health care within social health protection schemes by focusing on purchasing and the institutional links between quality management and social health protection schemes.

As a technical conference, its aim is to gather, share and systematise evidence and experiences of various approaches to purchasing and quality management and their impacts on quality health care by reviewing country cases, advisory approaches and tools.

Background

The previous conferences of the GTZ-ILO-WHO-Consortium on "Social Health Protection in Developing Countries" have focused on the issue of extending financial risk protection through resource generation and prepayment for health, as well as risk pooling. The first conference in Berlin in December 2005 set a political agenda for health financing systems based on the values of solidarity, universal access and equity, and the consensus was reflected in the Berlin Recommendations for Action. The conference in Manila in October 2006 addressed the question of how to extend social health protection to the informal sector.

While resource collection, population coverage and pooling are critical issues in health financing and social health protection systems, the question of purchasing is of equally great importance for optimal resource use, as well as for delivering quality health care. Yet many countries struggle with the delivery of adequate quality health care, thus making it

difficult to achieve significant improvements in health outcomes. Quality in health care is essential in order to make prepayment for health care acceptable to beneficiaries.

Focus

Strategic purchasing, demand-side strengthening and quality management are ways to increase quality in health care. The conference will look at a variety of institutional mechanisms and arrangements in social health protection schemes and how purchasers and consumers can use these to set incentives for providers to deliver quality in health care.

For working purposes, quality in health care is understood as technical and clinical quality, avoidance of underprovision to those who cannot pay and overprovision to those who can, as well as responsiveness to patients and community views.

Proposed session

Strategic purchasing for quality health care

Strategic purchasing involves a continuous search for the best ways to maximise health system performance by deciding what should be purchased, how and from whom. This entails finding the best and most context-appropriate provider payment mechanisms. Each purchasing approach and payment mechanism has advantages and disadvantages. But adding or combining elements of different provider payment mechanisms can help strengthen incentives to achieve quality in health care.

Performance-based financing shifts the focus of purchasing to outputs and outcomes. Remuneration of providers is contingent upon their performance and achievements of set (quality) targets. Yet, like other purchasing instruments, this requires good monitoring.

Demand-side strengthening to increase quality in health care

Purchasing is primarily known as a supply-side approach, but it also relates to demand-side instruments.

Demand-side instruments, such as vouchers for patients, do not only improve patient's access to services, but can also effectively influence provider behaviour, as they provide choice and create competition for quality among providers. Another question is whether these instruments help and empower communities to actively demand better quality in health care.

The role of quality management in social health protection

A quality management system, accreditation mechanisms and other institutional arrangements are ways to enhance quality. When linked with purchasing and contracting, they can be a powerful means to ensure and improve quality services. How to best link and integrate these is a critical question. The way the various organisational actors, foremost purchasers and providers relate to each other is therefore critical.

The overall key questions for each of these subjects are:

- What has worked and what has not?
- What are the impacts on quality?
- What are the institutional, organisational or inter-organisational factors that explain these impacts?
- How can the institutional arrangements in purchasing and/or quality management be optimised for improved quality health care?
- How can these approaches be scaled up?

The conference format comprises plenary presentations and parallel sessions for more detailed country presentations and discussions. Another conference element are "clinics"

focused on the exchange of advice and participant learning, where small groups examine a country's specific and confined question, problem and applied approach in detail in order to develop improvement strategies.

Participants

Participation is by invitation. The conference addresses health financing experts and policy advisers at the managerial and technical level from e.g. ministries of health, health insurances, social health insurance umbrella associations, mutual health funds and other forms of health insurance, hospital / provider associations, quality management organisations, as well as staff from the host organisations and technical assistance programs involved in purchasing, with a target of 80-100 participants.

The focus will be on Africa, but participants from other continents will be invited as well.

Output

Network building is encouraged and promoted among country partners working in health financing, purchasing and quality management. The proceedings of the conference will be published.

Deadline for abstract submissions: 10 September 2007

Deadline for registration: 30 September 2007