

# Optimizing the Pharmacy Channel



## Background

The Optimizing the Pharmacy Channel (OPC) project, implemented by inSupply Health, seeks to enhance the role of community pharmacies in Kenya in providing quality family planning (FP) services. The 2018 Revised National Family Planning Guidelines for Service Providers in Kenya paved the way for pharmacies to offer a broader range of contraceptives, including injectables, following the completion of the Ministry of Health (MOH) FP in pharmacy training. Building upon this opportunity, the project aims to optimize the pharmacy channel by expanding policy and practice and catalyzing an enabling ecosystem to ensure a wider range of FP methods are offered through pharmacies, including implants. This project aligns with the Kenya MOH's Total Market Approach (TMA), contributing to reduced burden on the public sector and addressing systemic barriers for enhanced access to quality FP services, products, and information in Kenya.

The OPC project is designed to increase access to an expanded and quality FP method choice, including implants, for women and girls through a strengthened pharmacy channel in Kenya by 2027. The project will complement inSupply Health's ongoing "Strengthening pharmacy provision of contraceptives in Kenya" project, the goal of which is to develop and test the viability and scalability of a pharmacy business model that offers customers convenient, discreet and quality counseling and training and provision of contraceptive products, with a focus on self-injection of DMPA-SC as part of a larger basket of self-care products.

## Project Summary

inSupply Health will partner with the MOH Kenya Division for Reproductive Maternal and Health (DRMH), the Pharmacy and Poisons Board (PPB) Practice Directorate, the Urban Research and Development Centre for Africa (URADCA), the Kenya Pharmaceutical Association (KPA), and the Pharmaceutical Society of Kenya (PSK) and work towards optimizing the pharmacy channel for expanded quality FP services and methods. This effort will encompass formative research to identify barriers, evidence gaps, and opportunities; a feasibility study to assess the acceptability of providing implants at pharmacies; the development of comprehensive, scalable training programs for pharmacy professionals; initiatives to increase client awareness of pharmacies as reliable sources of quality FP services; and market alignment strategies to guarantee a consistent supply of contraceptives to pharmacies.

## Project Outcomes

- **Optimized pharmacy channel:** Establish a pharmacy channel that provides quality FP services, an expanded method choice, and promotes self-care.
- **Implants feasibility and acceptability:** Generate evidence on feasibility and acceptability of the provision (insertion and removal) of implants by pharmacies in Kenya.
- **Policy and regulatory strengthening:** Strengthen the implementation of policies, incremental policy change and regulatory environment to enable an expanded and quality FP method choice provision, including implants, at pharmacies in Kenya.
- **Increased access:** Increased number of women and girls accessing and continuing quality self-care and FP products and services from pharmacies.

## Key Activities

- Conduct a needs assessment to identify gaps and address systemic barriers.
- Establish a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and develop a protocol for evidence generation on implant provision feasibility.
- Collaborate with a marketing agency for recruitment and demand generation.
- Partner with URADCA to lead the implant pilot and advocacy work.
- Conduct formative and longitudinal studies, literature reviews, and data reviews to answer key learning questions aligned with project outcomes.

## Implementation Approach

- **Training and Capacity Building:** Address gaps in pharmacy provider training, awareness, and market incentives to optimize the pharmacy channel.
- **Research and Advocacy:** Conduct research on factors influencing the expansion of FP choices in pharmacies, facilitators and barriers for pharmacists offering implants, and preferred regulatory pathways.
- **Pilot Implant Provision:** Pilot tests the provision of implants in pharmacies, addressing user willingness, provider factors, and operational considerations.
- **Learning and Evaluation:** Utilize formative studies, longitudinal studies, literature reviews, and participatory methods to answer key learning questions aligned with project outcomes.

## County Presence



Narok, Nakuru, Kiambu, Nairobi, Meru, Kajiado, Uasin Gishu, Kisumu, Kisii, Kericho



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