

# SEAM Ghana

## CAREshop Essential Medicines Franchise: Impact on Malaria Management in Drug Supply Outlets

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### Background

Licensed chemical sellers (LCS), who run privately owned drug shops, serve as the first stop for many Ghanaians when they seek antimalarials. With 4 of 10 Ghanaians experiencing an episode of malaria every year, the need for high-quality, affordable products as well as high-quality dispensing services cannot be underestimated.

The SEAM 2001 nationwide assessment and the SEAM 2004 Volta and Eastern Region-specific pre-intervention surveys revealed that, in addition to low availability of products, the quality of dispensing services at LCS shops was poor. Also, different manufacturers of antimalarials provide different product instructions and labels. The quality of services depended on the knowledge and skill sets of the LCS, as well as the level of supervision of the more than 8,000 LCS in Ghana.

These problems were found with the LCS—

- ❖ Drug outlets ignored appropriate dispensing practices on instructing clients on how to take medications purchased.
- ❖ There was a low availability of antimalarial products.
- ❖ No referrals were made to higher-level treatment centers.
- ❖ Staff occasionally dispensed antibiotics for malaria.
- ❖ Staff/proprietors had inadequate training in pharmaceutical services.

To address these problems, Management Sciences for Health (MSH) collaborated with GSMF International to develop the GSMFEL CAREshop franchise model in the Volta and Eastern regions of Ghana.

### Objectives

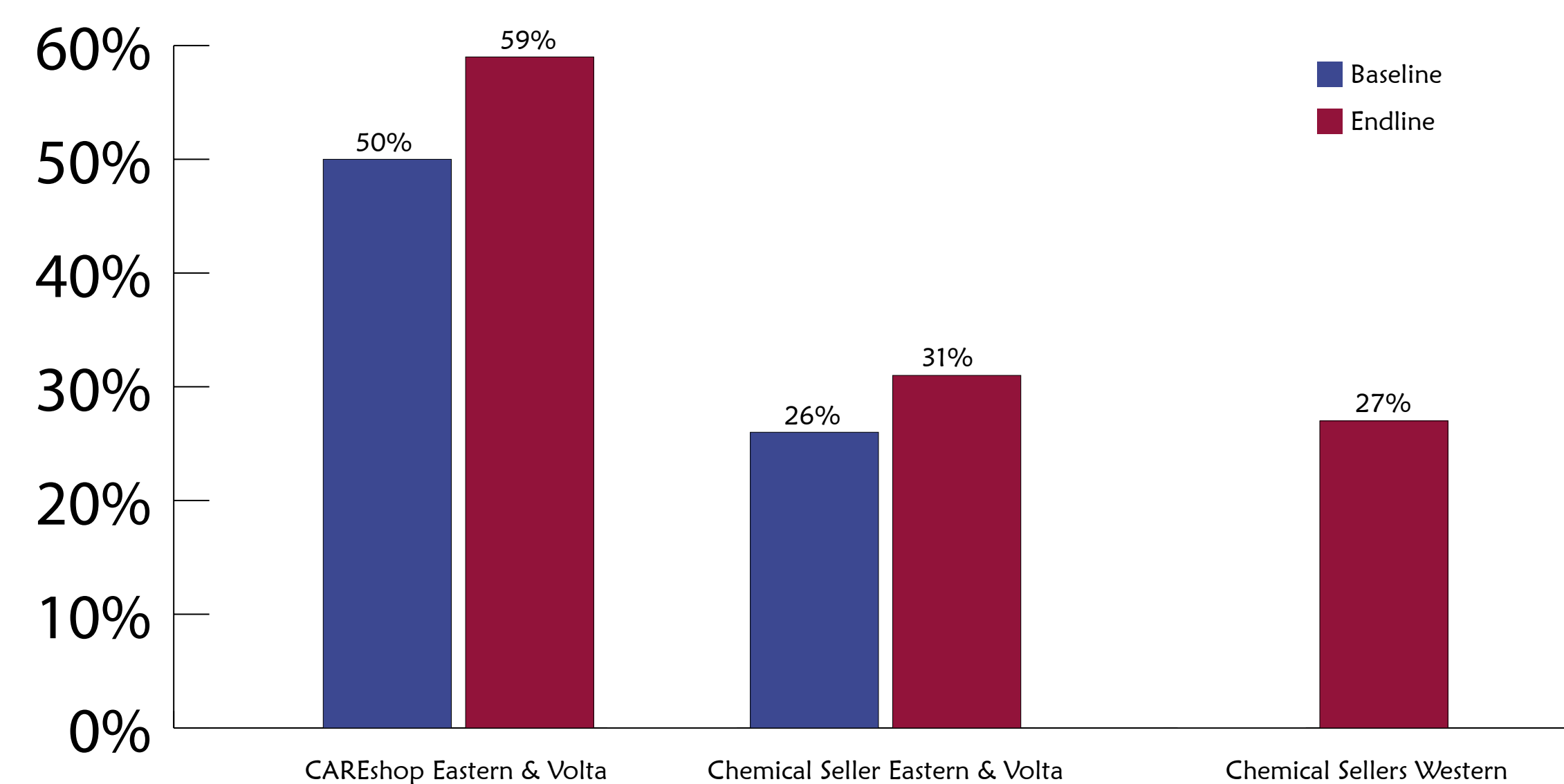
To enhance access to essential medicines, improve the quality of services of the LCS, and increase the availability and affordability of essential medicines in rural and peri-urban Ghana

### Key Elements of the Intervention

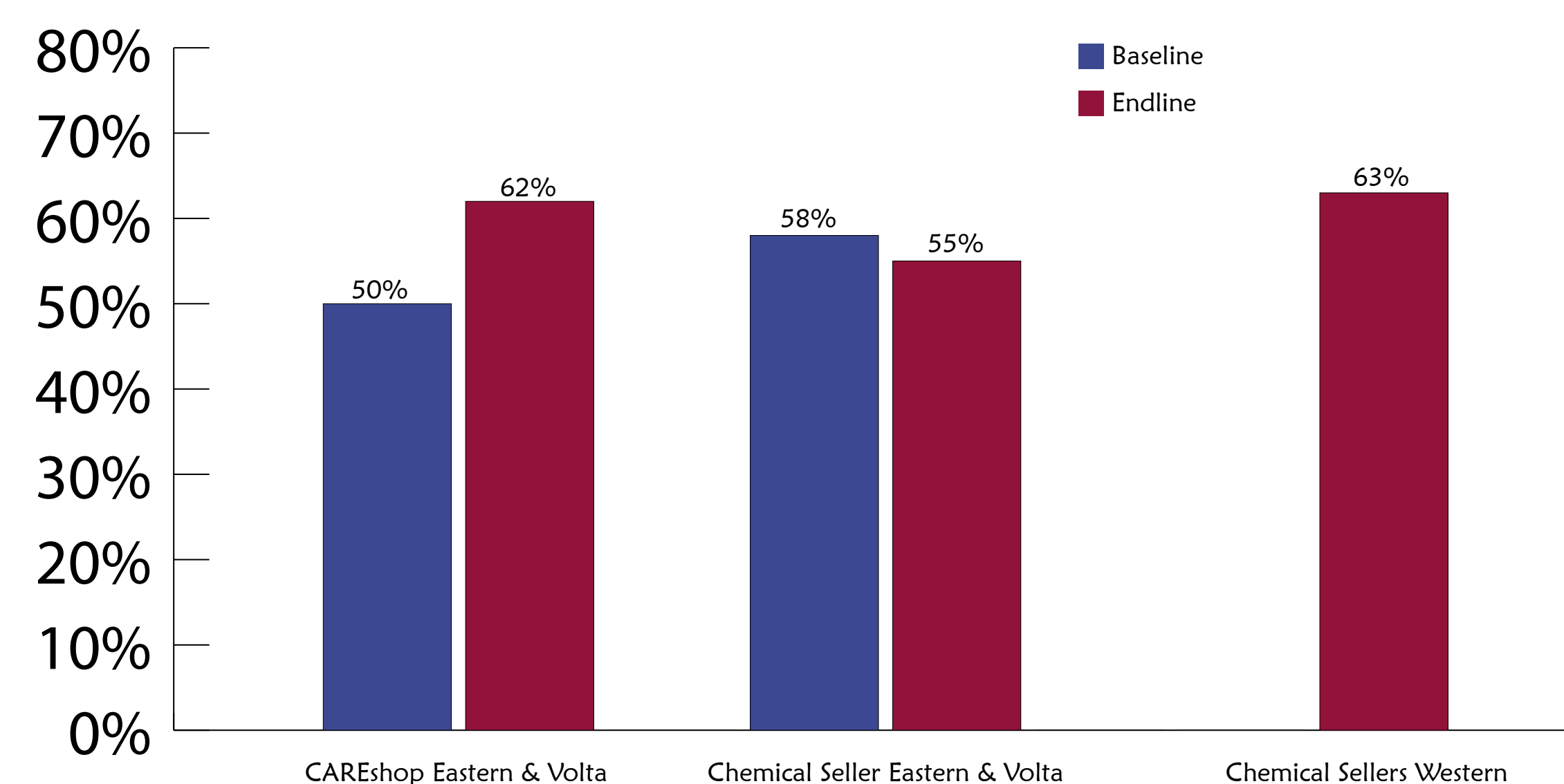
- ❖ A selection/enrollment process for LCS using the GSMFEL Franchise Selection Tool.
- ❖ A 10-week, 5-module training program designed and delivered to the selected group of licensed chemical sellers. The modules included Introduction to Franchising; Drug Supply Management; Recognizing Simple Ailments; Business Planning and Customer Care; and Action Planning. The module on recognizing simple ailments included appropriate dispensing practices in malaria management.
- ❖ A supervision/mentoring program to complement the regulatory functions of the Pharmacy Council.

### Impact and Results

MSH evaluated the impact of the CAREshop program on malaria management in the Eastern and Volta regions, as compared with the control region, Western.



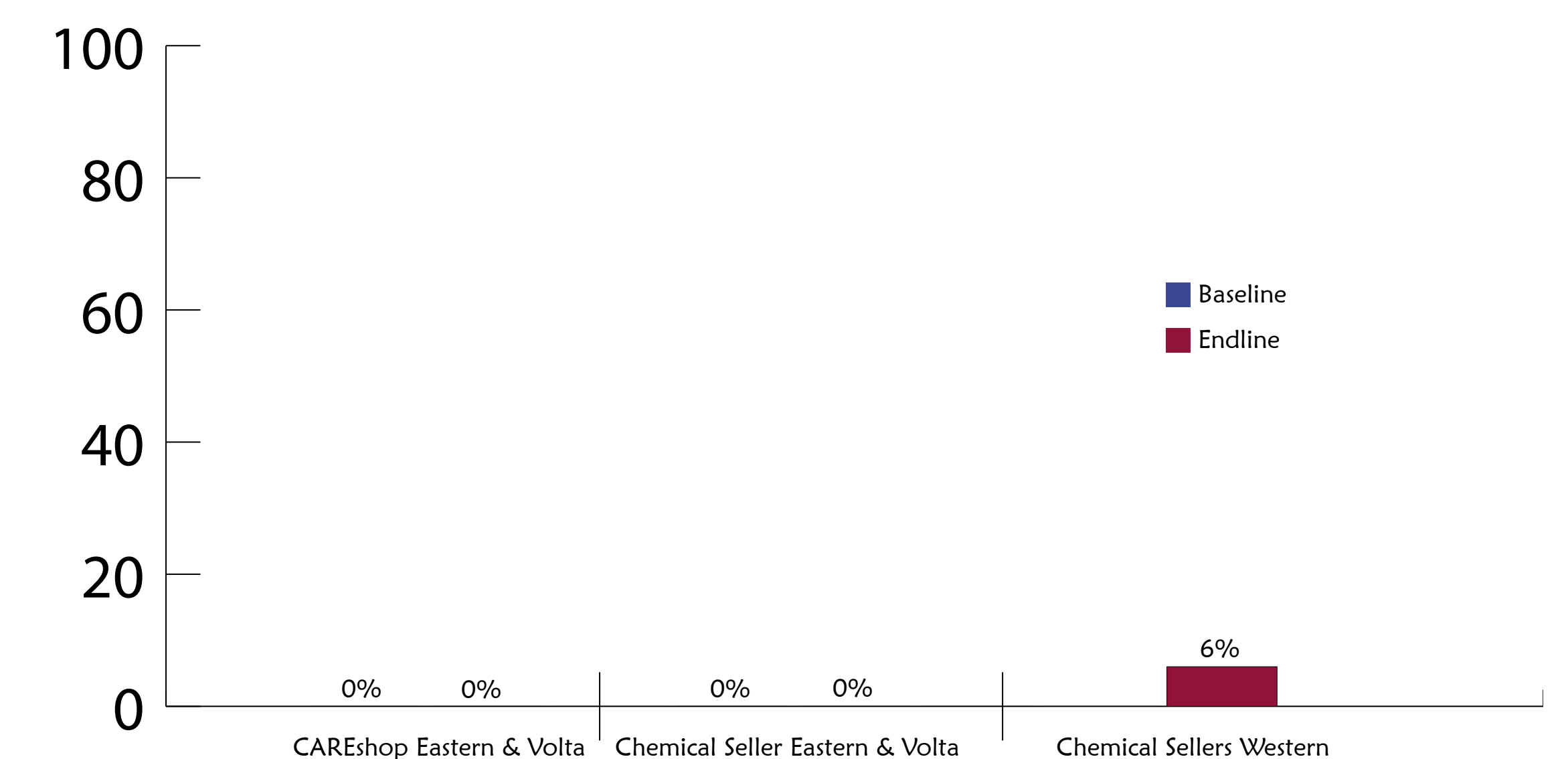
Graph 1. Percentage of simulated malaria clients asked about symptoms and other medications taken at CAREshops vs. nonfranchised LCS



Graph 2. Percentage of simulated malaria clients dispensed any antimalarials at CAREshops vs. nonfranchised LCS

#### ▶ Did we improve the quality of dispensing services from both technical and consumer perspectives?

- ❖ More CAREshop managers asked about symptoms and other medications used before dispensing than did nonfranchised LCS (Graph 1).
- ❖ At endline, there was an increase from 50 percent to 62 percent in dispensing of antimalarials to simulated malaria clients at CAREshops (Graph 2).
- ❖ No antibiotics were dispensed for treatment of malaria in either CAREshops or LCS in the Volta and Eastern regions during the evaluation. The data suggest that the CAREshop intervention reinforced rational use and the intervention did not lead to inappropriate prescribing of antibiotics for treatment of malaria.



Graph 3. Percentage of simulated malaria clients dispensed an antibiotic at CAREshops vs. chemical sellers, baseline vs. endline

### Conclusion

The CAREshop Program has achieved a limited proportion of its objectives in malaria management in the drug supply outlets in Ghana. In addition to the quantitative measures above, the practices of CAREshops have had a positive “spin-off” effect on other retail outlets in the Volta and Eastern regions, with most nonfranchised LCS rebranding their shops and improving the general outlook and nature of their practices to emulate CAREshops.

Also, with changes underway in antimalarials policy, the CAREshop provides a platform for well-trained drug sellers that will support the change to artemisinin-based combination therapy in Ghana.

