THE RWANDA HEALTH SYSTEM STRENGTHENING PROJECT

Over the past 20 years, Rwanda has realized impressive declines in infant, child, and maternal mortality through innovative health system reforms. Management Sciences for Health (MSH) has been a steadfast partner to the Government of Rwanda in these efforts. The Rwanda Health System Strengthening (RHSS) project (2014 - 2019) builds on work initiated under the Integrated Health Systems Strengthening Project (IHSSP, 2009 – 2014) and the HIV Performance-Based Financing project (HIV/PBF, 2005 - 2009), all funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and led by MSH.

RHSS supports the continued growth and improvement of Rwanda’s health sector by strengthening systems that support sustainable financing, governance and leadership, human resource management, quality improvement, and data management, and increasing the private sector’s support for sustainable health care.

RHSS works with national institutions and public and private health care providers and facilities to provide all Rwandans access to cost-effective, quality health services.

OUR PARTNERS:
Management Sciences for Health (MSH)
Banyan Global
Jembi Health Systems
Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine
The University of Rwanda School of Public Health

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RHSS is helping move the Rwandan health system toward financial independence by mobilizing domestic resources and supporting effective decentralization of management and service delivery. These efforts, combined with innovative quality improvement initiatives, support Rwanda’s continued progress toward a healthier population.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Initiated in five district hospitals under the Integrated Health Systems Strengthening Project, Rwanda’s innovative country-owned hospital accreditation system has driven impressive improvements in quality of care. (See center panel.) RHSS continues to train and mentor staff from these hospitals and will support expansion of the accreditation system to all health facilities in the country over time. The project is working with the Ministry of Health to establish a national steering committee and accreditation oversight body.

ENGAGING THE PRIVATE SECTOR

RHSS is building the capacity of the Ministry of Health and the Rwanda Biomedical Center to develop private sector engagement activities and public-private partnerships. Innovative initiatives, such as creating private wings within public health facilities, will decrease the burden on the public health sector and create revenue. The project is also identifying specialized services that can be delivered more cost effectively by the private sector, such as technology support and some clinical support services. RHSS will work with the proposed Development Credit Authority to incentivize local financial institutions to lend money for private sector health initiatives.

HEALTH FINANCING

RHSS ensures availability of comprehensive, effective financial management systems at all facility levels in the private and public sectors and within community health worker cooperatives. Through analyses of the true cost of facility-based care, the project is building the evidence base to set service fees.

DATA USE, RESEARCH, AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Rwanda has made great progress in harmonizing data collection in the health sector; however, routine use of data to make strategic, evidence-based decisions is not yet institutionalized. RHSS is helping develop a culture of data use by harmonizing monitoring and evaluation frameworks at the decentralized level to maximize use of available data; supporting strategic and operational planning in eHealth and mHealth; continuing to support existing information management systems—especially those developed using DHIS 2 and OpenMRS—and developing a broad base of local capacity to manage those systems; and establishing mechanisms to facilitate and promote operations research at all levels of the health system.

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

RHSS identifies barriers to effective decision making, implementation of policies, and gaps in institutional and individual capacities, proposes solutions, and supports their implementation. The project strengthens human resources for health at the central and decentralized levels and trains and mentors staff at all levels of the health system to improve policies, planning, and coordination of health interventions.