

Advocacy for stronger immunization supply chains



Vaccine delivery would be impossible without the people, equipment, and infrastructure that are needed to keep vaccines cool and safe in the often long journey to vaccination posts.

PATH/Doune Porter

SUPPLY CHAINS: DELIVERING LIFESAVING VACCINES

Weak immunization supply chains can impede the delivery of critical vaccines and put lives at risk. Vaccines are one of the most powerful tools in the fight against infectious diseases, but to be effective, they must be available in the right place, at the right time and temperature, and administered by a trained professional.

The immunization supply chains (or “cold chains”) currently used by most developing countries were put in place in the 1980s. Since then, progress in vaccine research and development has resulted in more than twice as many diseases that can be prevented through vaccination. More vaccines—nearly 11 times the volume—are now being offered to broader age groups in more settings and to larger populations. Undersized and outdated immunization supply chains cannot keep pace with programmatic goals, leading to regular stockouts, high wastage rates, and unreliable immunization and vaccine delivery data, all of which threaten children’s health.

Efficient and reliable immunization supply chains—which are regularly monitored and professionally managed, use up-to-date cooling equipment, and are streamlined for

optimal performance—are fundamental to ensuring that vaccines reach every child. New and innovative technologies and management strategies are already in use in many countries. What is needed now is political will at global, regional, national, and subnational levels to translate knowledge and experience into implemented policy.

RAISING POLITICAL WILL FOR STRONGER SUPPLY CHAINS

PATH is working with partners to help raise visibility and increase political will among country-level decision-makers for the adoption of emerging strategies and solutions to strengthen immunization supply chains.

We are working at both the global level and the regional level—particularly in Africa—to create an enabling environment for countries to prioritize and address immunization supply chain and logistics issues. We are also working directly in Uganda and Senegal to ensure supply chain improvement strategies are reflected in appropriate country plans and policies. PATH’s work is closely aligned with Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance’s Immunization Supply Chain Strategy and the WHO/UNICEF Hub for Immunization Supply Chains.

PATH’s long history of working to develop, evaluate, and advance innovative solutions for immunization and other health supply chains and logistics informs our efforts and allows us to integrate advocacy with ongoing supply chain research and innovation.

EXPANDING IMPACT THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

Advocacy benefits from the involvement of many stakeholders at all levels. We encourage partners to join us in raising awareness of the critical role that health supply chains play in achieving broader health goals for all people.

For more information, contact our project coordinator, Heidi Lasher, at h.lasher@path.org.