Using Mobile Phones to Improve Supply Chain Management of Public Health Commodities

Problem

Data visibility is essential to well-functioning public health supply chains. Paper-based management information systems that provide information on stock availability at low-level health facilities to central level decision makers tend to be slow and cumbersome – information often arrives too late to be useful.

Intervention

In several countries, use of mobile phones is improving supply chain data visibility. Key data are sent via SMS and available in near real-time to decision-makers.

How does it work?

Three Examples of SMS-Based Logistics Reporting Systems

ILSGateway in Tanzania: Supply Chain Performance Monitoring

cStock in Malawi: Resupply for CHWs

Early Warning System in Ghana: Stock Availability Visibility

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Conclusion

Simple, SMS-based stock reporting systems can greatly improve data visibility in the public health supply chain, providing decision makers with real-time information they can use to improve supply chain performance and availability of health commodities.

The work represented in the poster was implemented by JSI in partnership with Dimagi through funding by USAID (the ILSGateway and the Early Warning System) and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (cStock).