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LUZONHEALTH: **INCREASING SUPPLY** TO IMPROVE FAMILY HEALTH IN THE PHILIPPINES

In Luzon, the most populous island in the Philippines, trends in family planning stagnated or, for some methods, even declined over a five-year period since 2008. Teenage pregnancy was also on the rise.

To improve family health in 14 provinces and seven cities, LuzonHealth supports expanded access to high-quality, integrated family planning and maternal, neonatal, child health and nutrition services (FP/MNCHN).

We provide technical assistance to eight Department of Health Regional Offices — as well as provincial, municipal, and city health offices — to improve demand for and supply of services, and strengthen local policies and systems.

To increase supply, LuzonHealth has worked to upgrade health facilities as FP/MNCHN service delivery points (SDPs), ensuring that these facilities are staffed with trained health workers and have adequate health supplies. The Project also supported the establishment of service delivery networks (SDNs) to ensure the continuity of FP/MNCHN service provision at all levels of care.

Our Impact*:

- Current FP users increased by 13.3 percent from 1.5 million in 2013 to 1.7 million in 2015.
- Deliveries attended by a skilled birth attendant increased by 32 percent from 440,000 in 2013 to 580,000 in 2015.
- Deliveries in health facilities increased by 62 percent from 340,000 in 2013 to 550,000 in 2015.
- The number of pregnant women who have completed four antenatal care visits increased by 6 percent from 530,000 in 2013 to 560,000 in 2015.
- In 2015, 57.6 percent of children were exclusively breastfed for the first six months, higher than the 50.8 percent recorded in 2013.

*Results of implementing a package of demand, supply and health systems interventions in 21 Project sites from 2013 to 2015.



Dr. Cacdac and her team discuss their priorities for the day. (NGonzales/RTI International)

“For us, LuzonHealth’s biggest impact has been identifying areas with high unmet family planning need and training doctors in those areas. For example, it trained doctors in district hospitals to insert IUDs so people can go straight to a hospital that is closer to them...

Now, we don’t have to go out to remote areas as often to perform these procedures, and can spend more time in our hospital.”

— Dr. Joselita Cacdac, Family Planning Section Head, Dr. Paulino J. Garcia Memorial Research and Medical Center in Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija.



Rhodora Galapon counsels a woman, who recently gave birth, on family planning. (NGonzales/RTI International)

Our Approach:

- **Provide training support** for doctors, midwives, and nurses on FP counseling skills, lactation management, and key FP procedures like the insertion of intrauterine device (IUD). *As of September 2016, a total of 37,258 health service providers (HSPs) have attended various training courses since the Project started in 2013, while 133 HSPs have been trained as trainers in various FPI/MNCHN courses.*
- **Ensure FP commodities are available and delivered on time** by operationalizing a system for recording and tracking the flow of commodities. *Continuing to implement the system are 74 percent of the monitored 607 rural health units/health centers (RHUs/HCs), only 2 percent of which reported commodity stock-outs between March to September 2016.*
- **Support the upgrading of FP and MNCHN services at RHUs/HCs and hospitals as service delivery points (SDPs)** to strengthen SDNs. *As of 2015, 91 percent of RHUs, 92 percent of DOH-retained hospitals and 67 percent of LGU hospitals were considered SDPs. There are now 25 SDNs established in Project sites. Sixty-five (65) public hospitals have been assisted in establishing their FP services.*
- **Make FP/MNCHN services more accessible to adolescents** in schools and communities. *Four models of reproductive health programs specifically tailored for adolescents have been implemented in four Project sites.*

Spotlight: FP in Hospitals The Guimba Experience

Rhodora Galapon, a nurse, is the family planning point person at Guimba District Hospital in Nueva Ecija. With technical support from LuzonHealth, the hospital recently began providing FP services and Rhodora now counsels between 8 to 20 women a day.

After attending an FP training and speaking with LuzonHealth staff, the hospital chief decided to create a dedicated family planning space where Rhodora now sits.

“For me, the most rewarding part is when the patient says thank you and says now I understand. Or when they wave to you excitedly in the market and tell you that they have been taking their contraceptive pills every day,” Rhodora says.

LuzonHealth has also trained a doctor at Guimba District Hospital in bilateral tubal ligation, and will soon provide training in intrauterine device insertion.

“It will save women time and money from having to go all the way to a tertiary hospital for the procedures. They can have these done here instead.”

LuzonHealth (Integrated Maternal, Neonatal, Child Health and Nutrition/Family Planning Regional Project in Luzon) is a five-year United States Agency for International Development health service strengthening project implemented by RTI International.

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