

**SITUATION UPDATE: MOH CENTRAL DRUGS AND CONSUMABLES STORES IN GAZA
FIELD ASSESSMENT REPORT**

27 JANUARY 2009

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Central Drug Store (CDS) and the Central Consumable Store (CCS) are the authorized units of the Ministry of Health (MoH) for the provision of drugs, consumables and equipment to MOH hospitals and primary health care (PHC) centers in all Gaza strip. Until January 2006, all purchased or donated drug items came regularly to these units and were then released to the hospitals and PHC centres according their needs. This slightly changed when some of the donated drugs, consumables and equipment were delivered directly to the hospitals and/or the PHCs during the recent crisis.

Until 27 December 2008, there were 11 pharmacists and 4 workers employed at these units. With this number of staff, the CDS and CCS were previously able to prepare the MoH hospitals and MoH Primary Health Care facility needs and delivery. They were able to adequately provide information about their stock levels, including identifying the shortages and zero stock items.

The CDS, CSS and the Support Services Store (medical equipment and the non medical items) are all managed by the Director General of Pharmacy at the MoH.

CURRENT FUNCTIONALITY OF THE CDS AND CCS

In order to assess the situation at the CDS and CCS, a series of meetings were conducted with key personnel in addition to several field visits to six storages in Gaza City.

MEETINGS: KEY FINDINGS

- Upon the start of the military assault on Gaza, the Ministry of Health published the drugs, consumables and equipment needs on their web site and in the daily situation reports. The MoH donation guidelines were distributed and different lists of essential needs were sent to those countries/ donors interested in providing support.
- Within the first week of the conflict 2,000 tons of aid was received at the CDS and CCS.
- The MoH redeployed pharmacists previously working in other MOH units to increase the capacity of the team working at the CDS.

- From the 02 January, in coordination with the WHO, MAP employed a support team of 5 pharmacists and 5 workers to support the CDS, and 2 data entry staff and 4 workers to support the CCS. Three laptops were also provided to facilitate the work.
- By 26 January 2009, the number of pharmacists working at the central drugs and consumables stores was 35 pharmacists and 40 workers
- Until 24 January 2009, 300 trucks carrying 4,500 tons of aid was delivered to the CDS and CCS, in addition to 112 ambulances; however of these not all are fully equipped or appropriately marked.
- The MoH rented 37 storages in the Gaza Strip (11 storages in Gaza, 9 storages in the north, 8 storages in Rafah and 9 storages in Khan Younis). One of these sorting stores was jointly covered by MAP and WHO.
- It is estimated that as much as 50% of the aid delivered to the CDS and CCS may not be in accordance with MoH needs/ specifications.
- Some of the drug items are very close to expiry, with expiration dates within 1-2 months. This increases work for the staff who will have to dispose of the expired stock safely.
- The number of the donated blood units received from abroad was much higher than what was actually needed; stocking these units has taken much time and effort.
- The MoH has formed a committee of medical engineers to start checking the functionality of the medical equipment received to date.
- However, the most urgently needed equipment identified by MoH lists: pulse oxymeters, defibrillators, infusion pumps, syringe pumps, ventilators and anesthesia monitors have still (at time of compilation of this report) not been received.
- The newly rented or donated storage units are now directly receiving donations in order not to overload the CDS or CCS. At these stores, teams separate and categorize items for entry to the MoH data base.
- There is a great need for additional storage, in particular for solutions and bulkier drugs in order to free some space for the teams to continue sorting received items.
- There is also a need for additional staff to assist in completing the work at the CDS and CCS
- So far, only 30% (approximation) of what has been received has been classified and logged.
- It is recommended that countries stop sending drug items until the CDS presents an updated report of what they have in stock and what shortages remain.
- MAP has found that there was a strong consensus and agreement from all those interviewed for this assessment in terms of needs, challenges and recommendations

FIELD VISITS TO STORAGE FACILITIES: KEY OBSERVATIONS

- The pharmacist team and the workers work under difficult conditions.
- The storage facilities are full of stock, with little room for sorting which make it difficult for the team to identify the medical items efficiently.
- Considerable sections of these storages are full of solutions that could be stored in a separate storage to save space.
- The majority of the pallets in the storage facilities contain different types and different sizes of boxes which make the sorting more difficult.

- Also many donations came with no inventory or itemized lists.
- Some of the boxes contain mixed items of drugs and consumables.
- Some of the drugs and consumables items were shipped in boxes of food items, oils, detergent, even food sacks.
- The storages are not properly equipped; there are shortages of pallets, pallet lifters and plastic sheeting for re-sorting and distribution of sorted stock.
- The team has to sit on the floor and also have to put the contents of the mixed boxes on the floor in order to separate the different items.
- The number of the staff working in each storage facility is limited and insufficient for the work that needs to be done.
- The data entry personnel are working on the lists received from the donation storages. To date, MAP has been able to see what has been documented (up until 24 January 2009). This log clearly states the source of the donations, contents, quantities and expiry dates.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ensure additional availability of good quality and large storage spaces, ideally of : 1000-2000 sq. meter for efficient sorting
- Increase the capacity of the pharmacist team in each of the additional storage facility to more quickly classify stock. Suggested additional 10 pharmacists needed.
- Increase the number of the data entry personnel: currently 4 staff (of whom 2 are MAP support staff) to process up to date information more quickly. Suggested at least another 5 data entry staff needed with laptops.
- Increase the number of workers at each storage facility to increase speed and efficiency of the sorting and distribution of stock. Suggested additional 10 workers needed.

The MAP supplementary team are in place until June 2009. It is recommended that additional staff should be in place for an initial two month period, with an extension as needed.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

In preparation of this report, MAP interviewed the following MOH staff in Gaza: General Director of Pharmacy; Director of the Central Drug Store; Deputy of the Central Drug Store; Director of the Consumable Store; Director of Support Services stores; Responsible for the Equipment stores.