



# USAID MEDICINES, TECHNOLOGIES, AND PHARMACEUTICAL SERVICES (MTaPS) PROGRAM

*Improved Access. Improved Services. Better Health Outcomes.*

Photo credit: Warren Zelman

## Prior epidemic response experience

MSH provided technical support to four Ebola-stricken countries in West Africa in 2015 and 2016 to recover and rebuild essential medicines management and delivery services and increase health system capacity and sustainability. During the deadly 2017 plague epidemic in Madagascar, the MSH-led USAID Mikolo project quickly mobilized to set up functional epidemic watch committees in 220 villages and 30 communes in the 11 most-affected districts and to support district and regional health authorities in developing and implementing response plans, contributing to containment of the epidemic in under three months.

The USAID Medicines, Technologies, and Pharmaceutical Services (MTaPS) program helps low- and middle-income countries strengthen their pharmaceutical systems, which is pivotal to better health outcomes and higher-performing health systems. The program is implemented by a consortium of global and local partners, led by Management Sciences for Health (MSH), a global health nonprofit.

*Funded by the US Agency for International Development and led by Management Sciences for Health (MSH), the goal of the five-year USAID Medicines, Technologies, and Pharmaceutical Services (MTaPS) Program (2018–2023) is to help low- and middle-income countries strengthen their pharmaceutical systems to ensure sustainable access to and appropriate use of safe, effective, quality-assured, and affordable essential medicines and pharmaceutical services.*



## SUPPORT TO COUNTRIES FACING COVID-19

For decades, the lead of the USAID Medicines, Technologies, and Pharmaceutical Services (MTaPS) Program consortium, Management Sciences for Health (MSH), has supported governments around the world in building resilient health systems that have the sustainable capability to take coordinated, measurable actions to prevent epidemics, detect biological threats early, and respond rapidly to disease outbreaks. MSH has collaborated with a wide range of government, civil society, and private-sector partners to build capacity in advocacy and coalition building, provide training in disaster preparedness, and improve emergency communications outreach.

**MTaPS and global health security:** From its inception in 2018, the MTaPS Program was selected by the USAID Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA) group as a flagship mechanism for antimicrobial resistance interventions, including technical assistance to countries in improving multisectoral coordination, antimicrobial stewardship, and infection prevention and control (IPC). MTaPS currently supports the GHSA in 11 countries, helping to build their capacity to protect their populations from infectious disease threats and to raise global health security as a national and global priority. As part of this work, MTaPS already has GHSA-dedicated staff in Bangladesh, DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania, in addition to MTaPS staff and offices in Nepal and the Philippines.

As the COVID-19 threat emerged in early 2020, USAID turned to MTaPS to support countries' emergency preparedness and response. At present, MTaPS has received funding and initiated COVID-19 response activities in 12 countries (Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Philippines, Senegal, Tanzania, and Uganda).

**Principles of COVID-19 assistance:** Even when providing emergency technical assistance, MTaPS stands by the fundamental principles of health systems strengthening, ensuring that interventions and innovations create sustainable human capacity and system elements that will contribute to lasting overall improvements in health system performance. We engage immediately with national counterparts to achieve buy-in, develop prioritized month-by-month program plans, and mobilize action, beginning with the most immediate threat prevention and response strategies recommended by WHO; the CDC; and other official international, regional, and national bodies. We work with national rapid response teams and support application (and updating, as necessary) of National Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans. Our collaborative approach relies on local talent and expertise, builds on national strengths, leverages the capabilities and resources of global and national partners, fosters innovation, and rapidly develops local capacities of both our partners and MTaPS' own staff and consultants.

**Technical capabilities: MTaPS addresses the following technical areas relevant to COVID-19:**

- IPC management at the national, facility, and community levels
- Triage for SARI/ARI patients
- Early recognition
- Source control (isolation)
- Application of COVID-19 precautions by health workers and patients
- Collecting and handling laboratory specimens
- Administrative controls
- Environmental and engineering controls
- IPC guidance to patients, family members, caregivers, and visitors
- IPC facility access guidance
- Sudden influx of patients/surge capacity
- Preparedness for possibility of mass fatalities
- IPC considerations for alternative care sites
- Waste management
- Mechanisms for supply and monitoring of emergency IPC commodity supplies

**Illustrative activities: MTaPS strengthens COVID-19 preparedness and response by:**

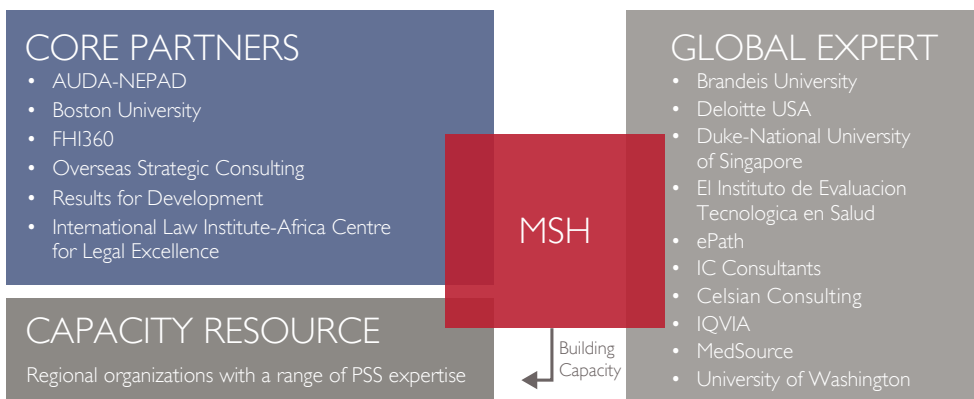
- Conducting rapid assessment of capacity for COVID-19 IPC at national/county/facility levels
- Strengthening national/facility IPC response coordination mechanisms and task forces
- Drafting or adapting regulatory guidelines, SOPs, precautions, and other support documentation for implementation of COVID-19 response, based on WHO guidance

- Developing IPC surge capacity that can be deployed to strategic locations
- Establishing national IPC hotlines/call centers for health workers and communities
- Rapidly mapping emergency supply chain stakeholders and assessing supply chain preparedness
- Developing emergency supply chain preparedness and response strategies and inventory holding policies throughout distribution networks
- Providing training on triage for COVID-19
- Conducting tabletop, drill, functional, or full-scale simulation exercises
- Providing just-in-time IPC training
- Overseeing implementation
- Assessing and monitoring compliance

To maximize effectiveness and impact even under COVID-19-related national lockdowns, MTaPS has developed a dedicated MTaPS COVID-19 Resource Hub for up-to-the-minute information sharing, deployed a core team of MTaPS experts to provide immediate technical advice and solutions, and applied distance capacity development and remote technical assistance approaches to adapt and deliver training content where and when it is most needed. The program uses WHO and CDC materials, supplemented by materials already developed in other countries and customized MTaPS-developed content, to meet country-specific needs. MTaPS is expanding distance teaching and just-in-time training capacity for Francophone and Anglophone countries by utilizing its own Moodle platform, existing or customized national platforms, or popular communication tools such as Zoom and WebEx.

**The MTaPS Consortium**

Led by Management Sciences for Health (MSH), the MTaPS consortium comprises core partners, global experts, and capacity resource partners. Core partners and global experts are listed below. Capacity resource partners include local organizations with regional or country-based knowledge, technical expertise, and networks (African Health Economics and Policy Association, African Collaborating Centre for Pharmacovigilance and Surveillance, Ecumenical Pharmaceutical Network, Kilimanjaro School of Pharmacy, Muhimbili University, Pharmaceutical Systems Africa, U3 SystemsWork, and the University of Ibadan) and other partners (Columbus Consulting, Empower Swiss, and Softworks).



**For more information, contact:**

*Senior Principal Technical Advisor*

Andre Zagroski

AZagorski@mtapsprogram.org

*USAID Program Team*

Alexis Leonard

aleonard@usaid.gov

Lisa Ludeman

eludeman@usaid.gov

Tobey Busch

tbusch@usaid.gov