

MEMS NEWSLETTER

MEMS NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2004

Volume 1, Issue 002

A forum for sharing progress on MEMS on-going activities and other related professional matters between MEMS and Participating Health Facilities

(Issued by the Mission for Essential Medical Supplies - MEMS)

Dear Reader,

We are very delighted to release the second issue of MEMS newsletter. The main aim of this edition is to continue from where we left, that is, communication between MEMS and the Participating Health Facilities (PHFs).

Remarkable steps have been achieved in MEMS developments that are worth sharing with all the actors in our MEMS project, PHF and our partners such as MSH and Danida:

January meeting between MEMS, MSH and PHF.

This successful meeting streamlined the list of items to be stocked by the PV at all time. The meeting reduced the older 'MEMS list' of item which consisted of 711 items previously submitted to the prime vendors for quotation to just over 530 items, both vital and the commonly used drugs and medical supplies. The new MEMS list of items with revised prices is now ready.

A second list of items which will be referred to as '*special order list*' was prepared. This list consists of items that facilities will order as needed. It was agreed between MEMS and PV that items in this list do not have to be stocked by the prime vendor; however, they should be made available, at prices offered, upon request and within agreed timeframe. The list includes items that are used in small quantities and/or those used by a few individual hospitals.

During the discussion, there were some concerns on prices of vital items that are used by hospitals. Doctors' in-charge expressed some concern on the need to ensure that vital items are not overpriced. The MEMS price list will be reviewed from time to time to keep abreast with hospitals' changing demands.

Provision of good quality of service was also emphasized. Impact of prices and quantities on hospitals as well as the vendor's side was given enough attention during discussion.

Prime Vendor Program development

Following the January meeting, the prime vendor has recently issued revised price lists as agreed. These MEMS list and the "special order list" of items and their prices will be circulated as MEMS team travel to individual

hospital for the discussion and signing of the MoU in early March. The prices are comparable to the reference prices used e.g. those of MSD and IDA.

The prime vendor has also secured a premise in Arusha (about 6 km from town) on the Arusha-Moshi highway. This premise is secure, accessible and a cold storage area for storage of the cold-chain pharmaceuticals; it will be used as a 'transshipment store'.

Delivery will be done for no charges up to the transshipment point and to facilities within Arusha Municipality. However, Illembula hospital (located in Iringa region, southern highlands of Tanzania) will either have to collect their supplies from Dar or pay extra charges for their deliveries via common couriers.

All other facilities will collect their orders from the transshipment point. Payment of additional delivery charges, agreed upon with the vendor, will enable goods to be delivered to individual hospitals.

Secondary vendor issue and modalities

MEMS and MSH have already selected secondary vendors (back-up supply system) for all the drugs and medical supplies should any problem that affects the primary vendor delivery system occurs. The back up system will be made up of 3 suppliers who were pre-qualified during the exercise of finding a prime vendor.

MEMS Communication through the Satellite Communication (VSAT) and HMIS Software

On this area of communication a hard work is still going on to ensure good quality of communication service is provided to the hospitals.

We are on the final stages of selecting a provider for the satellite communication. There are two quality options to choose from and we hope that a decision will be reached in March or April. The major factor in our selection of a provider for the wide area network coverage is the costs of buying and maintenance of software and related commodities, and the quality of service to be provided.

About Health Management Information System (HMIS), MEMS team with support from Dr. Mauri Niemi and Erik Jensen is exploring different software packages that could be used by all facilities with few or no problems. The main objective is to have an affordable software and reliable

support at reasonable price. There are various options of HMIS software that can be used, but require careful evaluation. This process may take much longer time than expected.

Training on computer and basic IT will be provided to pharmacy staff identified by the participating health facilities who would have signed the MoU prior to enrolment to the MEMS project. Training will include basic IT and other package such as word, excel and other relevant packages.

Rational Drug Use

The International Network for Rational Use of Drugs (INRUD) conducted two-week training at Fairview Hotel in Nairobi from 1st to 14th February 2004. The workshop was facilitated by experts from MSH, Essential Drug and Management programme of World Health Organization (EDM/WHO), Geneva and from INRUD Kenya. The course was attended by a total of 37 participants from Namibia, Zambia, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Ghana and Tanzania. A team of four participants from MEMS participated in the training.

Funds from Cord Aid and Danish Mission Council Development Department (DMCDD) were used to support the MEMS staff during the course.

The rational drug use course was conducted using various teaching methods and the content includes:

- Identification of drug use problems;
- Factors that influence prescribing patterns;
- Indicators for assessing drug use;
- Field exercises to assess drug use;
- Methods to evaluate effectiveness of drug use interventions;
- Standard Treatment Guidelines for improving quality of care;
- Influencing prescribing patterns;
- Public education on drug use; and
- Planning intervention studies.

From this training, MEMS has developed a rational drug use concept paper that will be implemented in the PHFs.

While in Nairobi, MEMS established a link with other INRUD members out of Tanzania to promote rational drug use promotion and improve quality of care. Currently, there is an INRUD Tanzania and we hope that PHFs will be members of the network.

MEMS also joined Ecumenical Pharmaceutical Network (EPN), which unites pharmaceutical staff from church organizations all over the world. MEMS is delighted to be a member of the network

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between MEMS and PHF

As discussed several times in the previous preparatory meetings for MEMS expansion, the MoU has been drafted. It will be communicated and discussed with the health facilities as the MEMS/MSH team visit individual hospitals. Individual hospital considerations will be incorporated into the MoU as the team passes each hospital for discussions. It is expected that hospitals will

sign this document before being engaged in further MEMS development.

MEMS new members of staff

Last month, MEMS employed three new staffs. Orgenes Lema, a senior laboratory technologist from AMREF Kenya who has been in collaboration with MEMS since its planning stages in 2001; Anne Vestskov, pharmaceutical technician from Denmark who has been in Nyakahanga hospital, Kagera region, for more than five years heading a drug revolving fund of the hospital she is highly experience in pharmacy management. Ernest Makena is a new MEMS financial and administrative manager; he was formerly an employee of World Food Programme (WFP) before joining MEMS. We wish to take this opportunity to welcome them aboard.

MEMS way forward

Action/Event	Timeframe
MEMS round tour to the PHF with intention of signing MoU	March
To finalize MoU between MEMS and PHF	March
To Introduce MEMS to diocese, donors/partners	March/April
Contract agreement between MEMS and PV	April
Meeting with hospitals that have signed the MoU	April/May
Carry out baseline studies for PV and Rational Drug Use	April/May
Training on stock control and IT	May/July

It is expected that the first order from the prime vendor to the participating health facilities will be delivered in July/August

For further communication please contact:
 Mission for Essential Medical Supplies (MEMS)
 P. O. Box 1162
 CEDHA Compound
 Sanawari
 Arusha
 Tel. 027 250 9366
 Email: mtukai@elct.or.tz
ulla-erik@elct.or.tz