

Adequate Vaccines and Timely Delivery to My Facility

Abdulhamid B. Bello is the officer in charge of routine immunization (RI) in Bayan Fada town dispensary in Bauchi state. The dispensary provides health services to about 160 people and handles an average of 12 vaccinations every day. Abdulhamid ensures that the needed vaccines are readily available and properly managed and that every child who visits the dispensary is vaccinated.

Previously, the practice was for Abdulhamid to make the 6-kilometer trip from Bayan Fada to the cold store at Bauchi LGA headquarters twice a week, to pick up the vaccines. Since his dispensary had a functional cold chain system, he was also tasked with redistributing some of the vaccines to cascade facilities within his ward, that did not possess their own cold chain facilities. Apart from the extra cost of transportation (almost N3,200 every month) which he incurred, several manhours were frequently lost waiting to collect the vaccines.

"Bayan Fada is 15 minutes from the LGA cold store, which commences operations at 9 am. The cold store staff takes at least 45 to 50 minutes to prepare records and double check the stock before attending to anyone. No matter when I get there, I have to wait the same amount of time before I can get the vaccines."

- Abdulhamid Bello

Sometimes, he would be unable to get certain vaccines and this affected RI sessions not just at his facility but at the cascade facilities which depended on his supply for their own sessions. In such cases, he would need to visit the cold store again.

"I used to spend between two to three hours going to the cold store and waiting to get vaccines. It was quite frustrating because I could have spent that time attending to patients at the dispensary."

In 2016, the Bauchi State government engaged eHealth Africa to implement a biweekly push system called Vaccine Direct Delivery (VDD) in 136 facilities.

Vaccine Direct Delivery (VDD) is a third party logistics service that ensures that the correct doses of potent vaccines and dry goods are delivered in a timely manner to health facilities at the ward level.

The delivery process is well planned and scheduled so that the cold store staff and Abdulhamid know exactly when the vaccines will be picked up and delivered. Using an application called LoMIS Deliver, eHA's health delivery officers deliver the vaccines in quantities sufficient for the RI sessions at Bayan Fada dispensary and its cascade facilities.

"The eHealth Africa delivery staff always arrive at my facility on time and count the stock balance before making the delivery. Since VDD started, we have had an adequate supply of vaccines and deliveries are done in a timely manner. I am happy because I am confident that every child who is brought to my facility will be vaccinated."

This completely eliminates the hours spent to collect vaccines as well as the added transportation cost. More importantly, VDD ensures that vaccines are never out of stock at the dispensary, a feat necessary to increase the immunization coverage and reduce the chances of partially immunized or unimmunized children in Bauchi state.

The success recorded by VDD has been remarkable and this year, the Bauchi state government expanded the push system to reach an additional 148 health facilities in the state. Since its inception, VDD has delivered 13,050,132 antigens to facilities in Bauchi state; translating to the immunization of 6,920,427 children. The Vaccine Direct Delivery project is an example of how eHA develops context-specific, data-driven solutions to challenges in logistics and health service delivery in Nigeria.