

Abstract

# Preparing Health Systems to Respond Effectively, Adaptively, and Efficiently to Infectious Disease Outbreaks <sup>†</sup>

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**Abstract:** A country's ability to prepare for, detect, and respond to infectious disease outbreaks such as the Ebola outbreaks in West Africa and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the recent Zika outbreak in the Latin American and Caribbean region, depends greatly on its competency in mobilizing skilled staff, and in providing and resupplying its health system with essential infection prevention and control commodities during public health emergencies. Health systems in most developing countries suffer from fragmentation; limited coordination and leadership; lack of national health security policies and legislation; low staff capacity and competency; and inadequate information systems necessary for decision making. The global health security agenda (GHSA) has stepped up efforts to build the capacity of such countries to effectively respond to health emergencies by strengthening health systems preparedness and ability to respond to outbreaks and epidemics. Chemonics International leads the implementation of multiple efforts to strengthen health systems across the world in support of the GHSA mission, both through the implementation of USAID funded activities and through its membership in the GHSA Private Sector Roundtable. Under the USAID Global Health Supply Chain—Technical Assistance Francophone Task Order, Chemonics developed a framework of essential competencies for emergency supply chain (ESC) management to help countries prepare and respond to outbreaks and epidemics. This framework has been piloted in Cameroon, and has wide-ranging applications for ministries of health, central medical stores, and regional level logistics units. Additionally, Chemonics, through the USAID funded Human Resources for Health in 2030 (HRH2030) program, supports the efforts of National One Health Platforms to ensure efficient multisectoral coordination; support integrated surveillance, preparedness, and response systems; and develop emerging diseases preparedness and response plans as well as prevention and control strategies, including leading the first ever simulation exercise in Ethiopia focused on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza.

**Keywords:** health systems; infectious disease; global health security agenda; Human Resources for Health; supply chain



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