

STOP MEDICINE STOCK-OUTS



www.stopstockouts.org

Campaign statement







Access to essential medicines is a human right and a cornerstone of an effective primary health care system. Access to free essential medicines determines whether people live or die, suffer pain and discomfort or have their ailments cured, recover from illness or endure life-long disease.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines essential medicines as “those that satisfy the priority health care needs of the population... Essential medicines are intended to be available within the context of functioning health systems at all times, in adequate amounts, in the appropriate dosage forms, with assured quality, and at a price the individual and the community can afford.” At the World Health Assembly in 1977, our governments made a commitment to ensure these essential medicines are available in public health facilities.”

Yet today, over 30 years later, public health facilities in Africa have in stock only about half of a core set of essential medicines. These are medicines used to treat common diseases such as malaria, pneumonia, diarrhoea, HIV, TB, diabetes and hypertension – all of which are among the highest causes of death in Africa.

Stock-outs disproportionately affect the poor, and this is exacerbated in rural areas where stock-outs are the worst. To compound these problems, stock-outs force people in already dire circumstances to buy medicines at much higher prices from the private sector. Due to these excessively high prices, patients are frequently forced to go without medicines needed to treat serious conditions that are otherwise treatable or preventable. Too often, stock-outs unnecessarily leave patients facing serious illness or death.

The “Stop the Stock-outs” campaign is calling on governments and health departments to end stock-outs now by:

-  Providing financial and operational autonomy to the national medicines procurement and supply agency
-  Giving representation of civil society on the board of the national medicines procurement and supply agency
-  Ending corruption in the medicine supply chain to stop theft and diversion of essential medicines
-  Providing a dedicated budget line for essential medicines
-  Living up to commitments to spend 15% of national budgets on health care
-  Providing free essential medicines at all public health institutions.

The failure to properly stock public health clinics and pharmacies with essential medicines stems in part from economic constraints and bureaucratic obstacles. But above all, it is a failure of political will. If governments commit to having medicines on pharmacy shelves, they can do it.

We call on African governments to honour this commitment to provide essential medicines. We also call upon international allies and civil society actors to assist them. It is time to **“Stop the Stock-outs, Ensure Access to Essential Medicines for All!”**

Campaign partners

Kenya:
CIN Kenya
Consumer Information Network
KETAM
Kenya Access Treatment Movement
KEPHCA
Kenya Hospices and Palliative Care
Association
EPN
Ecumenical Pharmaceutical Network

Malawi:
MHEN
Malawi Health Equity Network

Madagascar:
SISAL
Sambatra Izay Salama

Uganda:
AGHA
Action Group for Health Human Rights and
HIV/AIDS
HEPS
Coalition for Health Promotion and Social
Development
NAFOPHANU
National Forum of PLHA Networks in Uganda

Zambia:
NZP+
Network of Zambian People Living with
HIV/AIDS

TALC
Treatment Advocacy and Literacy
Campaign

Zimbabwe:
CWGH
Community Working Group for
Health

Regional /International partners:

OXFAM
HAI Africa - Health Action International Africa

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