
USAID Initiative Raises Awareness of Malaria Medicine Quality

(Washington, DC – September 14, 2010) Sub-standard and counterfeit medicines exacerbate the malaria burden in the Amazon Basin but United States Agency for International Development’s (USAID’s) Amazon Malaria Initiative (AMI) is taking effective steps to improve the situation. A new AMI fact sheet, issued today, describes how the program recorded significant progress in fighting this infectious disease that annually strikes nearly a half a million people in the region.

The fact sheet lists how AMI:

- Raised awareness about the need for improved medicine quality in participating Amazon Basin countries: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, and Suriname.
- Assisted in implementing a decentralized methodology to monitor and control medicine quality by promoting and facilitating the use of portable laboratories for medicine quality testing.
- Strengthened the official medicine control laboratories in each country by providing laboratory training and supplies, and guidance on quality management systems.

“AMI provides an essential component to ensure the use of high-quality medicines through the implementation of comprehensive quality assurance (QA) and quality control (QC) systems in the subregion,” said Victor Pribluda, manager of Latin American Programs at Promoting the Quality of Medicines Program, implemented by the U.S. Pharmacopeia (USP), an AMI technical partner. “We are coming close to making these systems operate in such a way that ensure only good quality medicines are procured and controlled at every stage of the distribution chain until they reach the patient.”

To this end, the initiative has conducted activities in four complementary areas:

- Strengthening QA and QC throughout the supply chain.
- Strengthening the official medicine control laboratory in each country and increasing South-South (American) collaboration.
- Assisting in the development of a decentralized methodology and its implementation to monitor and control the quality of medicines in the subregion.
- Raising awareness about the issue of antimalarial medicine quality among participating Amazon Basin countries.

AMI’s mission is to ensure that national malaria control programs in partner countries incorporate selected best practices and promote lasting, evidence-based policy change. The initiative’s efforts to improve the control and treatment of malaria have paid off, in terms of lives saved and illness averted; treatment plans have been modified since AMI’s inception, and malaria morbidity and mortality rates in the participating countries have decreased significantly.

AMI was launched in 2001 by the USAID as a health partnership among partner countries and six international technical partners: Pan American Health Organization, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Management Sciences for Health, USP, Links Media, and Research Triangle Institute. For more information, please visit AMI Web page at <http://www.usaidami.org/>.