

## 324: PATHWAY TO INSTITUTIONALIZATION: GUATEMALAN MOH SCALES UP PERFORMANCE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

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### Objective:

Scale up the implementation of a Performance Quality Improvement process within the Ministry of Health to improve maternal and neonatal health in Guatemala.

### Methods:

To contribute to improved maternal and neonatal health outcomes, JHPIEGO, an affiliate of Johns Hopkins University, is active in a USAID-funded Maternal and Neonatal Health project (MNH) to increase the adoption of practices and use of services that are key for maternal and neonatal survival. In coordination with the Guatemalan Ministry of Health (MOH), and with collaboration of PAHO, UNFPA, CARE, Project HOPE and many other local and international organizations, JHPIEGO developed a Performance and Quality Improvement (PQI) model for accrediting maternal and neonatal services at the hospital, community maternity, health center and health post levels in 60% of the MOH health areas in the country. Designed for easy duplication and on-going use, the model facilitates measurement of health care performance.

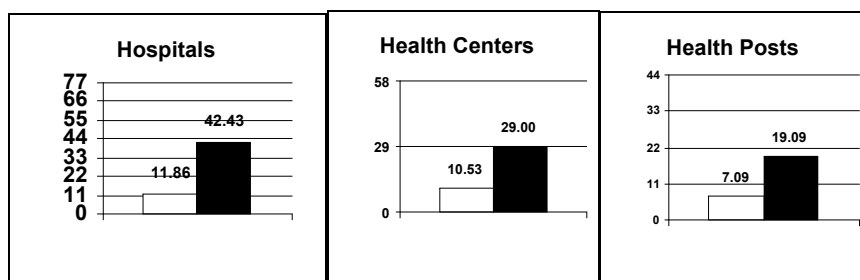
The PQI approach emphasizes the following methods:

1. Define evidence-based criteria of quality maternal and newborn care
2. Train providers to improve competencies in essential maternal and neonatal care
3. Create a tool for operational assessment to standardize and improve quality of care
4. Identify gaps in quality and performance at facilities and their causes
5. Facilitate collaborative teamwork to reduce gaps with the goal of accrediting services
6. Foster internal MOH and international agency cooperation and involvement to increase project coverage and scope.

### Results:

The PQI tool containing 77 criteria for hospitals and community maternities, 58 for health centers and 44 for health posts is based on the MOH-adopted evidence based norms (largely from WHO *Integrated Management of Pregnancy and Childbirth*). It helps health facilities implement and monitor performance related to best practices in prenatal care, labor, postpartum and newborn care (including the management of obstetrical and neonatal complications), infection prevention, managerial systems, human and material resources, management information systems, blood bank and laboratory, and education activities.

Between March 2001 and September 2002, the MOH (with technical assistance from MNH/Guatemala) conducted baseline evaluations to measure performance levels in 153 facilities. A subsequent evaluation of 59 facilities one year later showed important improvements in performance. The graphs below document the reduction of gaps in the technical areas that the PQI model evaluates in 7 hospitals, 17 health centers, and 35 health posts. As an example, an average of 12 of 77 criteria were met by the seven hospitals evaluated at baseline, and 43 of 77 criteria were achieved after one year. Other facilities show similar gains in performance. It is anticipated that MOH authorities will accredit approximately 55 facilities during 2003.



During 2002, the MOH (with PAHO and CARE) began expanding use the PQI process in five additional health areas, bringing the total number of facilities using PQI to 406. A cohort of

final year medical students plus thirty-three professionals (from the OB/GYN Association, Nursing Association, universities, and Board of Physicians and Surgeons) have been trained as PQI evaluators to contribute to sustainability.

More than 190 providers have been trained using JHPIEGO's competency based training methodology that includes knowledge updates and skills standardization, practice and follow-up, and clinical training skills. Providers are trained first in the technical area, and later apply skills with anatomic models prior to working with patients.

**Conclusions:**

A user-friendly model for performance improvement and evaluation in maternal and neonatal health care facilitates effective scale up interventions by MOH, international and local NGOs, and universities.