



Using Accredited Drug Dispensing Outlets as a Platform for Increasing Access to Public Health Interventions in Rural Areas

Many Tanzanians in rural areas get first-line health care at retail drug shops that are easily accessible, but where untrained staff provides medicines and services of questionable quality. The Ministry of Health worked with Management Sciences for Health's Strategies for Enhancing Access to Medicines Program, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, to launch the accredited drug dispensing outlet (ADDO) pilot program in Ruvuma region to improve access to affordable, quality medicines and pharmaceutical services in under served areas. The ADDO program combines dispenser and owner training and incentives, consumer education, and regulations with efforts to increase client demand for quality products and services.



The success of the ADDO pilot or *duka la dawa muhimu* (Swahili for essential drug shops) led to the Tanzanian government's decision to expand the program nationwide, and the government is financing rollout in Mtwara and Rukwa regions. In the past two years, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, through the USAID-funded Rational

Pharmaceutical Management (RPM) Plus Program, initiated work in Morogoro region to scale-up ADDOs and prepare them to support HIV/AIDS palliative care programs; by October 2007, 431 ADDOs had been accredited and 628 dispensers trained on HIV/AIDS prevention and palliative care. ADDOs already sell most medicines contained in HIV/AIDS home-based care kits and distribute educational material for HIV/AIDS to rural communities.

The government and donors are expanding the scope of other services that ADDOs provide by using them to strengthen community-based health care interventions; for example, RPM Plus is collaborating with the BASICS Project to integrate a child health component into the ADDO package of services, and the President's Malaria Initiative is using ADDOs to distribute 600,000 doses of subsidized artemisinin-based combination therapies. In addition, the Mennonite Economic Development Association has linked 195 ADDOs in Morogoro with the national insecticide-treated net voucher scheme or *Hati Punguzo Voucher*.



A Tanzanian mother picks up an insecticide-treated net.