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## WELCOME NOTE

Dear <<First Name>>,

I am thrilled to share the latest updates from the Smiles for Mothers (SfM) program in this 18th edition of our newsletter. We have made significant strides in implementing the comprehensive PPH bundle, participated in key conferences, and conducted impactful training sessions, all aimed at improving maternal health outcomes across Nigeria.

Thank you for your continued support, and we look forward to building on this momentum to achieve safer motherhood across Nigeria.

Cheers!

## A New Chapter for Smiles for Mothers

The Smiles for Mothers program has evolved into a consortium between Health Strategy and Delivery Foundation (HSDF), Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI), and Solina Centre for International Development and Research (SCIDaR). Building on the success of our preparatory phase in Delta, Ebonyi, Katsina, and Plateau—which included providing technical assistance and resources to secure stakeholder buy-in for the comprehensive PPH bundle, conducting health system readiness assessments, updating training materials for healthcare providers, developing state-specific forecasts for each component of the PPH bundle, and building a pool of master trainers—the program is now set to implement the comprehensive PPH bundle across seven states: our legacy states (Kano, Lagos, and Niger) and our new focus states.

Over the next four years, with co-funding from the Gates Foundation and MSD for Mothers, we are focused on creating an enabling environment for scaling up the comprehensive PPH bundle by updating policies, training curricula, health worker protocols, and job aids at both national and state levels. We will also work to improve access to high-quality PPH care by equipping healthcare providers with essential skills and fostering greater demand for maternal health services. Lastly, we aim to enhance financial access to PPH care within secondary and primary health facilities by supporting sustainable funding for the comprehensive PPH bundle.

## Highlights from Annual Operational Plan (AOP) Workshops

The Smiles for Mothers team actively participated in the 2025 AOP development workshops across Delta, Ebonyi, Katsina, and Niger states. These collaborative workshops, held in partnership with State Ministries of Health and other key partners, focused on identifying and harmonizing all health priorities in the state in line with the state's strategic development plan.

During the state-level workshops, the program successfully incorporated proposed activities to support the rollout of the comprehensive PPH Bundle into Priority Area 12 of the AOP, which focuses on Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, Adolescent, and Elderly Health plus Nutrition (RMNCAEH+N).

The workshop culminated in preparing a draft AOP that includes budgeting for critical medical commodities like Heat-stable Carbetocin (HSC) and Calibrated drapes.

The Smiles for Mothers program activities to support the rollout and use of the comprehensive PPH Bundle were also incorporated into the 2025 AOPs of Kano, Lagos and Plateau states. These workshops represent a collaborative effort to enhance healthcare planning and delivery across these states. It also shows that implementing the comprehensive PPH bundle is part of the states' priorities for the coming year.

## From Nigeria to the World: Smiles for Mothers Conference Highlights

The program in a bid to further disseminate lessons learned and program findings presented at four conferences.

### International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) conference: Kigali, Rwanda (September 24 - 26, 2024)

The program represented by Chukwunonso Nwaokorie and Aisha Abdullahi had the honour of presenting program findings at the ICM conference. The conference themed Midwives 360: Associations for a Changing World aimed to support midwives to develop the skills needed to build and grow strong midwives' associations, advocate for the profession, and strengthen regional networks. Over 350 midwives from 66 countries were in attendance.

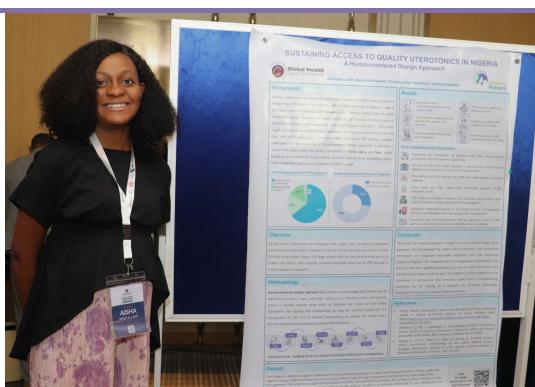
The program presented a poster on Effective Strategies for Training Healthcare Workers in Maternal Care in Resource-limited settings: Smiles for Mothers Program Learnings. The presentation gave insights into the effectiveness, cost-efficiency, and scalability of the in-facility and in-class training approaches employed by the program in improving midwifery skills in resource-limited settings. Our findings demonstrated that in-facility training was both more effective and cost-efficient than traditional in-class approaches for improving Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (EmONC) skills. The higher post-training scores, lower cost per participant, and greater scalability achieved through in-facility training highlighted its potential superiority as a training model for enhancing midwifery skills in EmONC in resource-limited settings.

[View Poster Presentation](#)

### Global Health Supply Chain (GHSC) Summit: Lagos, Nigeria (November 12 - 15, 2024)

The 2024 GHSC Summit was themed Value Chain Innovations for Universal Health Coverage. The event brought together supply chain experts from across the world to discuss innovations across the healthcare value chain that contribute to advancing universal health coverage.

Represented by Aisha Abdullahi and Ikenna Oranezi, the Smiles for Mothers team presented a poster titled **Sustaining Access to Quality Uterotonics in Nigeria: A Human-centered Design Approach**. This presentation highlighted SfM's approach to strengthening the supply chain of uterotronics in Kano, Lagos, and Niger states and introducing HSC across the states. Through this human-centered design approach, Smiles for Mothers is making impactful strides towards better maternal health outcomes in Nigeria.



SfM representative with the program's poster at GHSC



SfM representative at GHSC Summit

In addition to their presentation, the team participated in various technical sessions, including a panel 'Supply Chain Beyond the Clinic.' This panel featured representatives from different countries, who shared strategies their countries have adopted to ensure equitable access to essential commodities. The team also connected with peers who shared similar interests, building relationships for future collaboration, while attending oral and poster presentations by other participants.



SfM representative discussing with other conference attendees



SfM representatives with Dr. Uchenna Igboekwe, ED, SCIDaR

### Society Of Gynaecology and Obstetrics of Nigeria (SOGON) Conference: Uyo, Nigeria (November 26 - 30, 2024)

The Smiles for Mothers team represented by Dr Chinedu Obikili and Sophia Ogefere participated in the SOGON 58th Annual General Meeting and Scientific Conference (Uyo 2024). The conference was themed **Sustaining Quality Maternal & Child Health in a Challenging Economy**, with sub-themes:

- Strategies for prevention of Gynaecological cancers;
- Mitigating Gender-based violence in Nigeria; and
- Improving uptake of family planning services in Nigeria

The conference was the largest gathering of obstetricians and gynaecologists in Nigeria, with over 500 attendees and stakeholders from a wide range of areas including healthcare and public health practitioners, members from the pharmaceutical industry, and vendors. There was significant participation from NGOs, including SCIDaR, Jhpiego, Nigeria Health Watch, Maternal and Reproductive Health Research Collective (MRHRC), and Centre for Clinical Trials Research and Implementation Science (CCTRIS).



SfM representatives with other SCIDaR representatives at SOGON

The team had an oral presentation titled **Optimizing Uterotonic Therapy: Heat-Stable Carbetocin's Clinical and Economic Benefits**. This presentation emphasized the clinical efficacy of HSC and its economic advantages, showcasing findings from implementation research. The session highlighted the WHO, MSD for Mothers and Ferring Pharmaceuticals collaboration on the public access pricing of HSC which aims to make HSC accessible at affordable and sustainable prices. Additionally, the presentation

addressed the importance of preventing inappropriate use of uterotronics, discouraging the co-administration of HSC and Misoprostol.



Dr. Chinedu Obikili delivering his presentation at SOGON



Dr. Chinedu Obikili for SfM at SOGON

## Health Systems Research (HSR) Conference: Nagasaki, Japan (November 18 - 22, 2024)

The Smiles for Mothers team, represented by Chukwunonso Nwaokorie and Naanma Kangkum, participated in the HSR 2024 conference. Themed **Building Just and Sustainable Health Systems Centering People and Protecting the Planet**, the conference brought together global health experts from numerous countries to discuss transformative approaches to achieving equitable and resilient health systems worldwide.

The team presented on **Establishing Sustainable Access to Quality Uterotonics: A Supply Chain Perspective**. Their presentation highlighted challenges the program encountered with availability and quality of uterotronics for PPH management in Nigeria and showed how through targeted interventions, the program achieved significant outcomes, including reduction in stockouts of uterotronics in program health facilities. The procurement of over 27,000 ampoules of HSC in program states and training of over 2,000 healthcare workers also demonstrated the program's commitment to strengthening health systems.



Naanma Kangkum delivering the program's presentation at HSR



Dr. Chukwunonso Nwaokorie discussing at HSR

In addition to their presentation, the team participated in technical sessions, engaging in group work and plenary discussions on sustainable health system solutions. They also networked with like-minded professionals, establishing relationships for potential collaboration, and attended oral and poster presentations by fellow participants.



Naanma Kangkum discussing in a panel at HSR



SfM representatives at HSR

## Shaping the Future of Healthcare Training

The Smiles for Mothers program participated in the 2nd review of the Life Saving Skills Manuals, held in Kano from November 4th to 8th, 2024. The review meeting, led by the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (FMoH&SW) and sponsored by UNFPA, included key stakeholders such as federal and state officials, clinicians, academia, and implementing partners like WHO, UNICEF, CHAI, JHPIEGO, and NISONM.

Tunde Amode, representing the Smiles for Mothers program, had a presentation on the program's support in the introduction and scale-up of HSC for PPH prevention in Nigeria. This presentation sparked reflection and consensus among participants on the importance of retaining HSC for PPH prevention in national guidelines and training manuals while awaiting the conduct and results of Randomized Control Trials (RCTs) on its use for the treatment of PPH.

Additionally, updates were made to the Life Saving Skills manuals, particularly in chapters and sections related to PPH care, to include the EMOTIVE package for PPH management. These updates emphasized the importance of accurate blood volume loss estimation through calibrated drapes and the bundling of care approach for optimal maternal outcomes.

## Building a Stronger Healthcare Force in Kano

To further its healthcare systems strengthening initiatives aimed at reducing maternal mortality in Nigeria through collaborations with national and sub-national governments, the Smiles for Mothers Program, along with other implementing partners in the maternal and newborn health ecosystem, conducted a training of state trainers on comprehensive postpartum hemorrhage (PPH) bundled care. This training was supported by the Kano State Ministry of Health.

The objective of the training aligns closely with the nation's drive to reduce PPH-related adverse events and to equip new and existing trainers in Kano State with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively train others on the appropriate prevention and treatment of postpartum hemorrhage.

Working with other implementation partners such as ACEPHAP and TAConnect, the Smiles for Mothers Program, represented by Fatima Muhammad, supported the training of 29 state trainers, comprising doctors, nurses, and midwives. The training included didactic sessions, demonstrations, and role-play sessions. Immediate knowledge and skills gained were measured through written pre- and post-training tests, as well as observed structured clinical examinations on active management of the third stage of labor (AMTSL), management of PPH, and manual removal of retained placenta, among other topics. As a next step, over the course of the year, the program will support the cascade of knowledge and skills gained to more healthcare workers in Kano and other program states.



Participants at the Kano State training of trainers



OSCE demonstration at Kano State training of trainers

A promotional image for a webinar. It features logos for the Federal Ministry of Health, Smiles for Mothers, and Ferring Pharmaceuticals. The text reads: "PRESENTS A webinar on: Best practices on the use of heat-stable carbetocin (HSC) and other uterotronics for the prevention of PPH in Nigeria. SPEAKERS: Naanma Kangum, Dr. Vishal Shah, Dr. Tunde Amode. Date: January 23, 2025. Time: 12:00pm - 1:30pm. Platform: ZOOM. Registration link: bit.ly/Smiles-for-mothers-webinar." Below the text is a small image of a woman holding a baby.

## Kick-off of New Webinar Series

We launched a new webinar series on PPH management, and our first session was a hit! Over 100 healthcare professionals joined us for "Best Practices on the Use of HSC and Other Uterotonics for Prevention of PPH in Nigeria" where we uncovered interesting insights on HSC for PPH prevention.

Keep an eye out for more details on our upcoming sessions coming soon!

[Watch the replay](#)



## Three Years of Transformative Impact

In the three years since our inception, we have reached over 626,000 women across 658 healthcare facilities, trained 2,207 healthcare workers, and achieved a 38% decrease in PPH incidence rates in our implementation research facilities. Our comprehensive health systems strengthening approach is creating lasting change in Nigeria's maternal health landscape

[Download our impact brief](#)

## Peer-Reviewed Research Published

We are excited to announce our implementation research study on uterotronics is now published in the *International Journal of Maternal and Child Health and Aids*! This research deep-dives into how HSC, Oxytocin, and Misoprostol are being used in Nigeria's secondary and tertiary health facilities.

The study reveals critical insights about:

- Current patterns in prophylactic uterotonic use

- Healthcare providers' acceptance of Heat-stable Carbetocin
- Key enablers driving appropriate use of uterotronics

[Read full publication](#)

# QUESTIONS?

We are always available to answer any questions you may have about the program

[Contact us!](#)

**Smiles for Mothers Program Playbook:** A guide for country adoption of WHO's revised recommendation on the use of uterotronics for PPH prevention  
(Based on SfM experience in Nigeria)

## Reducing Postpartum Haemorrhage through Service Delivery and Supply Chain Innovations



[Download the Smiles for Mothers Playbook](#)

This newsletter is a collaborative effort of Sarah Aligbe, Hauwa Ahmad, Aisha Abdullahi, Sophia Ogefere, Ikenna Oranezi, Lotanna Chukwujama, Peter Abu, Chinedu Obikili, Tunde Amode, Fatima Muhammad, Chukwunonso Nwaokorie, Naanma Kangkum, Lola Ameyan, and Layi Olatawura representing the views of the Smiles for Mothers consortium.

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