



**COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM OVERVIEW OF THE PSNF
EPHARMACY4FP PROJECT (2023 TILL PRESENT)**

April 2023

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ACRONYMS

ACPN	Association of Community Pharmacists of Nigeria
AMX DT	Amoxicillin Dispersible Tablet
APML	Approved Patent Medicine List
BMGF	Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
CPs	Community Pharmacists
CPR	Contraceptive Prevalence Rate
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DMPA-SC	Depot-Medroxyprogesterone Acetate-Subcutaneous
dRPC	development Research and Project Centre
EML	Essential Medicine List
FMOH	Federal Ministry of Health
FP	Family Planning
GoN	Government of Nigeria
HMH	Honorable Minister of Health
IEC	Information, Education and Communication (Materials)
mCPR	Modern Contraceptive Prevalence Rate
NAPPMED	National Association of Patent and Proprietary Medicine Vendors
NDHS	Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NSTG	National Standard Treatment Guideline
OTC	Over-the-Counter
PCN	Pharmacy Council of Nigeria
PMS	Patent Medicine Shop
PMV	Patent Medicine Vendor

PPMVL	Patent and Proprietary Medicine Vendors License
PPMVs	Patent and Proprietary Medicine Vendors
PSNF	Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria Foundation
RH	Reproductive Health
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SFH	Society for Family Health
TSTS	Task Shifting and Task Sharing Policy
UHC	Universal Health Coverage

1.0 BACKGROUND

Nigeria is one of the most rapidly growing countries on the African continent, with a total fertility rate of 5.3 live births per woman and 46 million women of reproductive age. The modern contraceptive rate among married women, however, is low at 16.6% nationally, despite efforts to increase contraceptive uptake, and unmet need remains high at 18.9. Both supply and demand side factors contribute to low demand and high unmet need. A 2022 systematic review in Nigeria identified health service-related barriers to FP including the cost of services, difficulty accessing services, procurement difficulties, long distances of sources, poor service of family planning clinics, facility dependence on donor organizations for supply of FP materials, and stock outs. The study also identified client-related barriers including education, desire for more children, uncertainty about the need for family planning, partner disapproval, previous side effects, religious beliefs, culture disapproval, ignorance, and embarrassment. Solutions that can address combinations of supply and demand-side barriers to FP are urgently needed in Nigeria.

Three promising high-impact practices (HIPs) that have recently emerged in the field of family planning include expanding contraceptive choice and access through pharmacies and drug shops, leveraging digital technologies for social and behavior change, and leveraging digital technologies to improve time and resource efficiencies in FP systems. At the intersection of these high-impact practices sits a potential game-changer: the e-pharmacy. In the same way that private pharmacies and drug shops are often the first line of health care in low- and middle-income countries, particularly for underserved populations, e-pharmacies have the potential to meet these needs through widespread distribution models, bulk purchasing to reduce costs, and private delivery to homes and pick up points. Additionally, e-pharmacies have a unique digital platform that can be leveraged to generate awareness and demand for FP and provide counseling and other FP services. Finally, e-pharmacies sit atop digital systems for procurement, distribution, and inventory management, which create opportunities for efficiencies that reduce costs, improve data visibility and quality, and support scale.

As of 2018, nearly 43% of modern contraceptive users in Nigeria purchased their method in the private sector and of these users, 79% purchased their method at a pharmacy or drug shop, indicating high reliance on these sources and a willingness to pay for FP in the private sector. Seeking to serve this sizable and growing private sector market, e-pharmacies have emerged in Nigeria as of 2020 to address the gap in health service delivery and contraceptive access by harnessing the high potential of mobile and internet penetration in key states and the high use of the private sector for accessing modern contraception. The sale of medicines over the Internet represents a major disruption to pharmacy markets across the globe. While initially the preserve of high-income countries (HICs), in the past decade it has been growing rapidly in low-income and middle-income country (LMIC) settings. E-pharmacy presents potential opportunities for enhancing access to medicines. Purchasing medicines online can be quick, simple, convenient, and private. As internet and mobile phone penetration increases, e-pharmacy has the potential to improve the access, transparency, and cost of healthcare. Online health services can bridge the gap for people who may not otherwise be able to access FP products and services (as was the case during the COVID-19 pandemic). Mobile phone ownership, cybercafes, and access to universities or libraries are all positively correlated with online health information

search and use. In 2021, 92% of men and 88% of women owned a mobile phone and 54% of men and 34% of women used mobile internet. While the gender gap for mobile internet use remains significant, an additional 18% of Nigerian women own smart feature phones which can be a stepping stone to normalizing women's use of smartphones and accessing more life-enhancing services. Additionally, given that the youth proportion of Nigeria's population is expected to reach 81% by 2030 and young people are early adopters of technology, internet use will likely play a significant role in the socioeconomic development of the country going forward. Finally, mobile internet use is substantially higher for both men and women in more digitally connected states such as Lagos where this proof-of-concept investment will take place.

E-pharmacy also presents opportunities to generate evidence for supportive medicine regulation PCN is responsible for licensing and regulating pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, and PPMVs, as well as the premises where these practitioners operate. The vision of the PCN is to create an enabling and regulated environment for the provision of quality pharmaceutical service for sustainable health care delivery. Through effective discharge of its regulatory mandate, PCN aims to contribute to the attainment of the main objective of the National Health Policy, which is to provide adequate access to primary, secondary, and tertiary healthcare services for all Nigerians. In 2022, PCN institutionalized the first guideline for e-pharmacy regulation. However, the implementation is still nascent, with several gaps. Bearing in the mind the importance of an enabling regulatory environment for e-pharmacy to thrive, this project will help set the stage for the appropriate regulatory framework for e-pharmacy in Nigeria by supporting PCN to review and update the current guidelines. By adopting lessons from countries that have successfully implemented e-pharmacy models and sharing regular updates on the evidence generated through this investment, the project will support PCN to understudy strategies that will facilitate e-pharmacy and FP interventions in Nigeria.

To be sure, e-pharmacy is nascent in Nigeria. However, given the rapid growth of mobile and internet penetration, the high reliance on the private sector for FP, and the interest and momentum of state and federal regulators in providing guidance in this space, there is strong potential for scaling this hybrid product and service delivery channel which can also potentially generate demand through referrals from other product categories. This investment will explore whether and how this novel e-pharmacy channel can effectively expand access to FP, for whom, and at what cost.

Throughout the four-year duration of this project, PSNF will advocate for policy change, and work closely with regulators and other government officials to develop new or improved guidelines and regulations for selling FP products on a hybrid e-pharmacy platform. The current PCN guidelines are still nascent, with several gaps and inconsistencies. For example, the guidelines do not specifically allow prescriptions via telephone or online consultation, yet this is a common practice. It also restricts the quantity of prescription medication that can be delivered through online platforms, which may impact FP products that are prescribed for multiple months, such as birth control pills. Finally, the guidelines lack clarity on policies and regulations around digital advertising for FP products. This project will seek to address these types of gaps, thus strengthening the overall policy environment for the safe, widespread distribution and use of FP products and services.

HealthPlus currently partners with Outpost Health to bring telemedicine to clients via a mobile application. Through this app, clients can consult a doctor via a virtual visit, digitally fulfil a prescription, and maintain private and secure health records. Clients can also chat with a pharmacist between 8am and 8pm 24 hours 7 days a week through an online chat platform. HealthPlus also recently partnered with 3rd Party Logistics companies Nationwide such as with Jumia, KWIK, and Konga's delivery services to improve the speed and efficiency of product delivery to clients.

HP e-pharmacy was launched in Q4 2021 and has had 380k patient sessions since inception growing at 25% per month and projecting to reach 2 million by June 2023. This innovation enhances access to professional health services and has a multiplier effect on the health and well-being of Nigerians. For instance, HP are a significant source for those seeking care for those in need of family planning products and are often the first line of health care, especially in areas that lack public or private health facilities and services. HP plays an important role in meeting health care needs across urban and rural settings not only through its brick-and-mortar footprint but also through its highly accessible e-pharmacy virtual consultation and counselling services by providing high-impact services that can expand contraceptive choice and access. HP e-pharmacy data analytics is developed to be largely beneficial in the areas of risk prediction, diagnostic accuracy, and patient outcome improvement. This empowers health care providers to make timely and truly evidence-based informed decisions to provide more effective and personalized treatment while reducing the costs of this care to patients especially useful in chronic disease management. HP e-pharmacy digital network creates value by facilitating connections through partnerships such as telemedicine, and laboratory services thereby aggregating and curating results, making it easier for customers to find what they need as a one-stop shop and reducing search costs. Hence are the providers of e-pharmacy to patients on this project.

Busara Center for Behavioral Economics has worked extensively to develop novel measurement tools and an innovative experimental approach to understanding human behavior. This unique experimental behavioral approach is complemented by teams specialized in innovative qualitative methods, behavioral design, data analytics, evaluation and strategic communications. With the rapid development of technology, accelerated by COVID 19, Busara has revolutionised a new age of research with Busara Online - a package of interactive, integrated, and improved research, and experimentation and design systems. These are delivered through a fusion of digital and traditional offline tools and methods, compatible with both remote and in-person engagements. They have been designed and tested through an iterative process to ensure that quality, rigor, and robustness are not compromised in remote work. The package includes a range of digital tools (apps, website, and offline tools), frameworks, and guides for remote methods, and Busara Live Support. One innovation is the proprietary Busara KITE app, which enables remote data collection and experimentation through participant recruitment and referral for snowball sampling, survey creation, self-administered surveying and polling, experimental A/B testing of content, and real-time participant incentive payments. Busara are experts in designing and implementing long-term learning agendas and strategies, infusing different types of organizations and teams with behavioral science capacity. Hence, are the research and measurement partner on the project.

SFH is the consortium lead coordinating all the partners on the EP4FP project.

The data source for background: EP4FP Concept note

Figure one: The theory of change for the EP4FP for achieving the above outcomes which is driven by three main complementary strategies is shown below



Source: The EP4FP Project Document

Then EP4FP project which is supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) was approved and commissioned for implementation in November 2022.

The EP4FP project is implemented by three complementary project work streams supported by SFH and other consortium partners (Busara, Pharmacy Council of Nigeria (PCN), Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria Foundation (PSNF), and HealthPlus Pharmacy), with SFH responsible for overall management of the project.

Project Locations



Figure two: A map showing the EP4FP implementation States (Lagos State and National)

The rationale for the selection of the project locations on the project were:

- BMGF high investment States and availability of funds- Lagos State

1.1 Overview of the EP4FP Project

Table one: Overview of the EP4FP Project

Project title	Optimizing e-Pharmacy for Family Planning (EP4FP) in Nigeria
Donor Agency	The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF)

Consortium Lead	Society for Family Health (SFH)
Other Consortium Partners	PSNF, Busara, & HealthPlus Pharmacy
Advocacy thematic areas	Work Stream A creating Enabling Environment
Duration	November 2022- October 2026 (5 years)
Project Locations	Lagos State and National.

Source: The IntegratE Project Document

2.0 PSNF EP4FP: PROJECT OVERVIEW (2022-2026)

The Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria Foundation (PSNF) commenced the implementation of the EP4FP project in **December 2022** with the inception phase work plan and budget development meetings. The key Staff was recruited and commenced project implementation on the **1st December 2022** using the **PSN National Building (Pharmacy House) Gudu, Abuja**, as the project office.

2.1 PSNF IntegratE 2022-2023 Staffing Plan

The composition of the team during the 2022-2023 implementation year is presented in the table below:

Table two: Composition of PSNF Team in 2022-2023

S/N	NAME OF OFFICER	DESIGNATION
1.	Pharm. (Prof.) Cyril Usifoh FPSN	Chief Executive Officer
2.	Pharm. Munir Elelu FPSN	Program Director
4.	Dr. Chidi Agbanye	Program Officer (till January 2023)
5.	Dr. Nseabasi Ekanem	Program Officer (From March 2023)
6.	Dr. Faith Eromon	Monitoring & Evaluation Officer
7.	Mr. Olafusi Samuel Olasehinde	Senior Finance & Admin Officer
8.	Miss. Sunkanmi Omotayo	Accountant

Source: PSNF IntegratE Staff Records

2.2 Overview of Conducted PSNF EP4FP 2023 Program Activities

The table below gives a brief synopsis of key activities, successes recorded, and milestones achieved during the 2023 implementation of the PSNF EP4FP project.

Table three: PSNF EP4FP Conducted Activities in 2023

In the month March 2023, the PSNF under the EP4FP project supported the PCN to convene a planning meeting for the review of the PCN Strategic Action Plan (2022-2026).

A successfully planning meeting was convened towards the review of the PCN Strategic Action Plan.



Under the EP4FP project, the PSNF also conducted a situational and landscape analyses of the e-pharmacy policy environment in Nigeria.

A robust report was produced by the PSNF to enable the PSNF to create the enabling environment for the successful implementation of the EP4FP project.

The PSNF from Tuesday 11th April to Saturday 15th April 2023 participated in the EP4FP quarterly meeting at the Sheraton Hotel Ikeja, Lagos.

The team provided programmatic updates involving the PSNF scope of work during the meeting and was also present at the joint advocacy visit to the Permanent secretary LSMOH as part of the creating enabling environment for the project.



In the month of May 2023, the PSNF on the EP4FP project, supported the PCN to convene a 2-day stakeholders' meeting for the review of the draft PCN Strategic Action Plan.

A successful review meeting which had about 65 participants from PCN and PCN related council supported to attend, was held with the draft document reviewed and awaiting validation and finalization.



Source: PSN EP4FP Program Records

2.3 PSNF EP4FP 2023 Key Achievements

Some of the key achievements of the PSNF EP4FP project in 2023 were:

- **Successful waiver collection.** The PSNF was able to secure a waiver extension from Lagos State for the EP4FP project implementation by CPs in Lagos State.
- **Review of PCN Strategic Action Plan 2022-2026):** The PSNF EP4FP project in collaboration with the IntegratE project supported the PCN to review its Strategic Action Plan.
- **Conducted situational and landscape analyses** to determine the e-pharmacy policy environment in Nigeria.

3.0 ANNEXURE

3.1 PSNF EP4FP Project: 2023 List of Information Education & Communications (IEC) Materials Produced

S/N	TITLE OF IEC MATERIALS	DATE PRODUCED
1		

3.2 PSNF EP4FP: 2023 Media Tracking Report

S/N	NAME OF MEDIA	TITLE OF REPORT	LINK TO THE REPORT	DATE PUBLISHED
1				

3.3 PSNF EP4FP: 2023 Media Tracking Report

S/N	NAME OF MEDIA	TITLE OF REPORT	LINK TO THE REPORT	DATE PUBLISHED
1				