THE THREE-STEP APPROACH TO IMPROVE CARE SEEKING AND REFERRAL IN 8 PHCUS: EXPERIENCE FROM JSI/L10K PROGRAM IN ETHIOPIA

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For almost a decade the Ethiopian government has improved access to health services through the health extension program. To reduce maternal and newborn mortality the country mobilizes communities to promote skilled delivery; has provided ambulances to strengthen referral linkages between communities and health facilities; and ensures basic emergency obstetric and newborn care in primary health facilities. Improving care seeking behavior is an entry point for increasing service utilization and improving maternal and newborn health (MNH) outcomes but it requires an effective referral system to link different service delivery points. To address this linkage the JSI L10K project works with government in eight districts to demonstrate innovative solutions for the referral of critical MNH conditions using a three-step approach: 1) assess the local context, available referral resources and the needs of the population; The initial step or “mapping exercise” drew upon a desk review, interviews with providers and community leaders, and focus group discussions with pregnant women and new mothers 2) use that information with health system and community stakeholders in the participatory design of innovations; Based on findings from the mapping process consultative workshops produced proposals for solutions. The process has aided communities to systematically identify PHCU specific resources they can tap into as well as gaps that need to be addressed with cross-cutting interventions and 3) implement active management of the referral system. This presentation will describe the methods and processes of the three-step approach and proposed solution.