

## MATERNAL HEALTH

The USAID Systems for Health project collaborates closely with the Ghana Health Service (GHS) to support evidence-based maternal, neonatal, and child health (MNCH) interventions. Systems for Health adopts a systems-strengthening approach to enhance provider competency and facility readiness, to prevent and manage MNCH morbidity and mortality.

In 2017, to maximize and sustain impact, Systems for Health engaged leaders and managers to ensure that mentorship, competency-building and quality improvement approaches were integrated in MNCH activities (Figure 1). Leaders and managers were provided innovative grants to improve safe and reliable emergency transportation in remote rural areas.



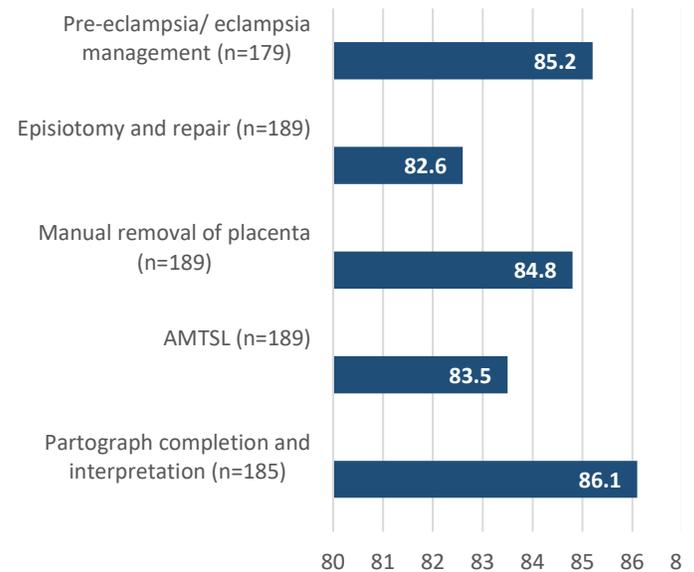
**Figure 1.** Providers trained via Systems for Health support.

### KEY MATERNAL HEALTH INTERVENTIONS

- Pregnancy schools
- Life Saving Skills (LSS) training
- Partograph training
- Emergency Triage, Assessment, and Treatment (ETAT)
- On-site coaching in pregnancy-induced hypertension

### The 2017 Year in Review

- Supportive supervision and post-training follow-up (PTFU)
- Shared learning sessions
- Quality improvement coaching
- Maternal death audits



**Figure 2.** The average percentage score for providers performing LSS according to standards.

### KEY RESULTS

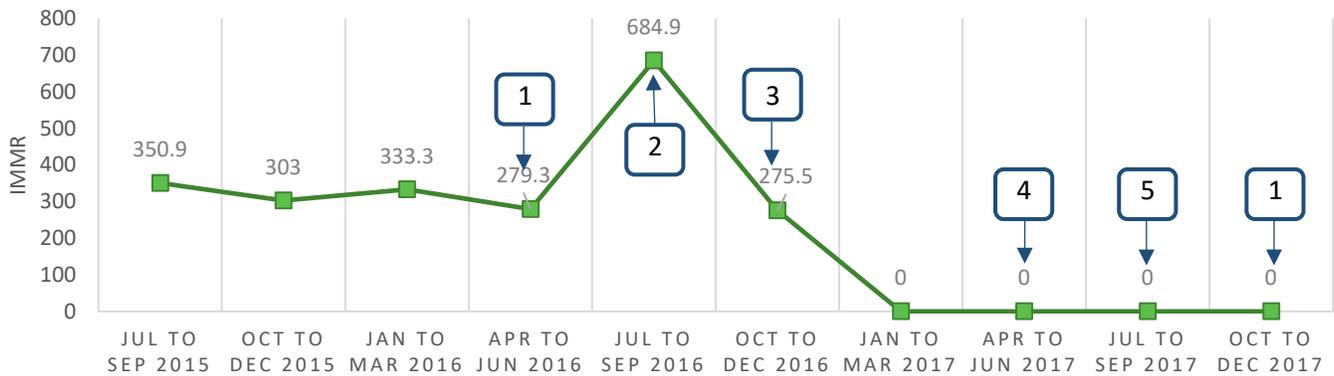
#### Provider competency in Life Saving Skills

PTFU visits with 212 providers trained in LSS revealed high levels of competency across all skills. Coaches and supervisors observed step-by-step demonstrations of LSS listed in Figure 2. On average, providers performed LSS with more than 80% accuracy, according to standards.

#### Case study: Zero institutional maternal deaths, Krachi West district

The Krachi West district hospital serves the adjoining Krachi East and Krachi Nchumuru districts, both of which have no district hospitals. This facility in the Volta Region serves as a major referral point for maternal health service delivery. Consequently, it had a relatively high institutional maternal

**FIGURE 3. INSTITUTIONAL MATERNAL MORTALITY RATIO, KRACHI WEST**



**Interventions in Krachi West:**

1. Training regional and district managers as quality improvement coaches, May 2016 and Dec 2017
2. LSS/EmONC training for midwives, July 2016
3. Training Community Health Management Committees, December 2016
4. Supportive Supervision, April-May 2017
5. LSS post-training follow up, July 2017

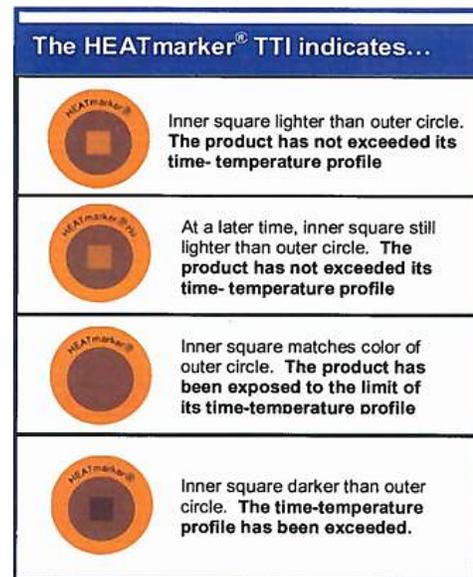
mortality ratio of 684.9 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in the third quarter of 2016. This was far above the 2016 national target of 137/100,000 live births (Figure 3). The Volta Regional Health Directorate, with support from Systems for Health, implemented a set of interventions: LSS to improve the management of pregnancy complications; PTFU visits to reinforce skills and facilitate improvements in maternal health service delivery; supportive supervision; and quality improvement training. Additionally, strengthening the Community Health Management Committee led to improved support at the community level. Following these interventions and throughout follow-up, Krachi West had 4 successive quarters of no maternal deaths (Jan to Dec 2017).

**Keeping Oxytocin Cold**

Oxytocin is a first-line drug used to prevent and treat post-partum hemorrhage. Its potency declines over time when the drug is exposed to high temperatures, making it hard for health providers to use the drug effectively. Systems for Health supported GHS research into the feasibility of adding time temperature indicators (TTI) to oxytocin packaging in Ghana’s cold chain distribution system. These heat-sensitive labels change color when exposed to high temperatures, thus indicating when the oxytocin is heat-damaged (Figure 4).

Researchers conducted an 8-month study (Apr–Nov 2016) in 10 facilities in the Greater Accra and Volta regions. The

GHS worked with URC and a sub-recipient of project funding, PATH International. The study revealed it is feasible to use TTI on oxytocin packages in the existing cold chain system. Midwives reported increased confidence when using oxytocin with a TTI. To reduce the cost, researchers suggested placing the TTI on packs of 10 ampoules of oxytocin. Systems for Health looks forward to working with the GHS to expand the availability and shelf life of this life-saving medication.



**Figure 4.** Sample TTI label.

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