

# OVERVIEW

## WHO we are and WHAT we do

NMS came into existence through an act of Parliament called the NMS Act of 1993 to deal with the growing demand for medicine and medical supplies. The role of NMS is stipulated in the mandate that is provided for in the NMS Act which is to Procure, Store and Distribute essential medicines and medical supplies of good quality primarily to public health facilities.

## Does NMS supply all medicine required by Health facilities?

NMS supplies medicine and medical supplies which are in line with the Essential Medicine List of Uganda.

These include; Antiretrovirals (ARV's), essential medicines, essential medical supplies, laboratory supplies including HIV test kits and basic equipment like stethoscopes, BP machines and thermometers.

NMS supplies in accordance with the facility's procurement plan. Each individual facility submits an annual procurement plan that forms the basis for ordering by that facility.

NMS supplies in accordance with the budget available to each facility. NMS can only work within the budget limits per facility.

NMS supplies in accordance with the policies of Ministry of Health with regard to items available at levels of care. Medicines and medical supplies can only be ordered for and supplied per the relevant level of care. For example Regional Referral Hospitals have greater needs than HCIVs which in turn have greater needs than those of a HCII.

## How does NMS receive orders from the health facilities?

National Referral Hospitals, National Referral institutes, Regional Referral Hospitals, General Hospitals and HCIVs orders are received directly in NMS+ through the Client Self Service Portal (CSPP) and once these orders are submitted the facility receives a notification email.

HC IIIs and IIs orders' (Program and laboratory orders) are received through email, post and

hand delivery to the NMS Head Office and Regional Offices.

## How do medicines reach facilities?

NMS delivers medicine up to the facility's doorstep. NMS delivers medicine to all health facilities from RRHs, General Hospitals, HCIVs, HCLIs and HCLIs through a system called Last mile delivery.

NMS contracts private transporters to deliver the medicines from district headquarters to individual lower health facilities. The in-charges of lower health facilities receive the cartons containing medicines accompanied by delivery notes specifying medicines in each carton. The in-charges and another member of the community or security organization then open the cartons to confirm that medicines received are exactly what is indicated on delivery notes and are in good condition then proceed to sign and stamp the delivery notes.

## Does NMS store and distribute vaccines?

Yes, NMS Procures, Stores and Delivers vaccines to the District Vaccine Stores (DVS).

There are two categories of vaccines;

**Vaccines against major childhood diseases** which are supplied to all Public and Private Health facilities in the country.

**Other vaccines** including Anti-rabies, Anti-snake, Yellow fever, Hepatitis B and Covid-19 vaccines. NMS expects



orders of this type of vaccines to be submitted with the rest of the facility order.

## How are Government medicines and health supplies identified?

All medicine and medical supplies that go to government health facilities are supposed to be embossed. Embossing means placing a special distinguishing mark to any product or supply distributed by NMS. All medicines and medical supplies that go to Government Health facilities have words, **“Government of Uganda Not for Sale”** on the labels and then a **“UG”** on a tablet, a capsule, vial or ampoule.

This policy was introduced;

- To ensure that patients easily distinguish medicines and medical supplies and get them free of charge from government health facilities.
- To ensure that embossed medicines and medical supplies are not diverted or stolen from government health facilities or stores and taken to private health facilities where they would be sold.
- It is meant to make it easy for law enforcement organs like Police and courts of law to easily identify the products meant for government for the purpose of charging and convicting suspects brought before them.

## Who is responsible for expired medicines and health supplies?

Medicines and health supplies have a shelf life. All items with a shelf life experience a degree of expiry, worldwide due to factors including unpredictability of disease patterns, passing away of some patients and staffing challenges. The level of

expiries, however, should be kept at minimal level. This can be done by;

- Proper planning based on disease patterns.
- Ordering for medicines and health supplies in quantities that can be used.
- Ensuring that the medicines and health supplies are properly stored and dispensed according to expiry dates (First Expiry First Out – FEFO principal).
- Prescribing medicine available in the facility.
- Liaising with the District authorities to redistribute medicine to neighboring facilities that need it.

## What doesn't NMS do?

- Regulate the importation and quality of medicines. This is done by National Drug Authority.
- Regulate the storage and use of medicines and health supplies in the facilities. This is done by the Health Facility In-charges, DHOs, Medical Superintendents, Hospital Directors and pharmacists.
- Supply of non-ordered essential medicines and health supplies however some non-ordered items are supplied through a directive sent by MOH for National programs like Mass immunization, change in ART and TB treatment guidelines, Child days plus, outbreaks such as Ebola, Marburg, Cholera, Nodding disease among others and ad hoc projects like Long Lasting Insecticide Nets (LLINs).
- Dispense medicines and vaccines to individuals. This is done by the Public Health facilities.

## Who do we work with?

- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development

- Ministry of Defense and Veterinary Affairs
- PPDA
- National Drug Authority
- State House Monitoring Unit
- Donors
- Implementing Partners (IPs)
- CAOs
- DHOS
- RDCs
- UG Police
- UG Prisons
- All Government Health Facilities (National Referral Hospitals, National Referral Institutes, General Hospitals, HC IV, HCIII and HCII facilities)
- Selected PNFs (Private not for Profit facilities)

## How do we handle complaints?

Complaints are received through email, CSSP, telephone calls, NMS regional offices, official letters and discrepancy forms.

- Once a complaint is received it is entered into NMS Smart Care where a ticket number (reference number) is generated for further follow up.
- It is then assigned to the relevant action officer depending on the nature of the complaint.
- The action officer receives a notification about the complaint and proceeds to review, investigate and provide feedback on the course of action within a given time frame.
- The Customer Care team then advises the customer on the agreed resolution and closes the complaint once the client is satisfied with the outcome.



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## What is the **BASIC KIT?**

Ministry of Health (MoH) introduced Basic Kits for HCII and HCIII levels of care in the FY2009/10. This was in response to quantification capacity gaps at these levels of care and challenges of the In-Charges of these facilities having to travel long distances to deliver orders to DHO offices. In order to ensure that they are in line with the needs of patients and cater for unique disease patterns across the country, they are reviewed and revised annually by individual HCII and HCIII In-charges under the supervision and direction of the District Health Officers in order to optimize the available resources and respond to the specific needs of the population. The principles for determining items to be included on the basic kits are according to:

- Levels of care according to the Essential Medicines and Health Supplies List of Uganda
- Current MoH treatment guidelines
- Minimum MoH standards and staffing levels to be expected at the different levels of care

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## WHAT IS NMS+?

The Government of Uganda adopted a National e-Government framework for the implementation of e-governance in the public sector including the health sector. The Ministry of Health developed, in 2016, a National e-Health Policy aimed at overseeing the effective utilization of ICT.

### **NMS+ is a set of Enterprise Resource Planning tool -**

centralized database, Self Service Portal (SSP), suppliers and customers' external portals, mobile applications, workflow notifications, approvals management engine, secure access, that provides fully integrated business processes and business intelligence reporting capabilities.

NMS+ represents a new way of doing business through the automation of most of the business processes aimed at Procuring, Storing and Delivery of essential medicines and medical supplies.

- ▶ The system will be secure
- ▶ The system will increase visibility of the supply chain process
- ▶ There will be controls in place to ensure the integrity of the system
- ▶ NMS will work with other MDAs and partners to implement the system and build capacity of Health Facilities and different stakeholders to understand, access and use the NMS+ ERP system

### **Benefits of NMS+**

- ▶ Improved accountability in practices of Procurement, Storage and Distribution of medicines and medical supplies
- ▶ Improved transparency of the activities of NMS
- ▶ Improved visibility of the entire supply chain of medicines and medical supplies of government
- ▶ Improving critical business lead time and inventory levels
- ▶ Increased customer and supplier interaction and satisfaction
- ▶ Housing NMS historical, financial, procurement, customer, warehouse and personal data in one location

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- ▶ Establish business data accuracy and reliability for faster reporting turnaround
- ▶ Satisfying Stakeholders expectations
- ▶ Enabling Organizational collaboration by bolstering workforce morale
- ▶ Providing mobility and flexibility from the office and home so that services to clients are delivered on time and not dependent on the physical presence of NMS staff
- ▶ The NMS+ ERP will have an integrated database and electronic trail of all transactions and thus will facilitate proper planning, monitoring and reporting of NMS' performance
- ▶ The system will lower the cost of doing business in the long term

## Phases of Roll out of NMS+

- ▶ The first phase of the roll out of NMS+ was launched (go-live) of the NMS+ (ERP) in June 2020.
- ▶ The NMS+ has seen Health Facilities begin ordering essential medicines and medical supplies directly from NMS through an online portal accessible at the HFs. The online portal will contain the procurement plans (for medicines and medical supplies) of the health facilities, delivery schedules and utilization reports. The NMS+ ERP system will also carry a regularly updated list of available (in-stock) essential medicines and medical supplies, a supply chain performance management system, client relationship management system, warehouse management system, financial management system and HR management system, which are currently maintained in separate systems.
- ▶ The ERP System will initially start with implementation within NMS

and a pilot in six high-level health facilities including the National Referral Hospitals, selected Regional Referral Hospitals and HCIVs.

- ▶ The second phase, started in July 2020, involved roll out in sixty-five large Health Facilities across the country.
- ▶ The third phase will include the expansion of the receipt and order or "self-service" function to five hundred and fifty Health Facilities or health districts where orders will be consolidated for and from Health Facilities within the districts that, for hardware or connectivity reasons, cannot use the ERP software system directly.

## Importance of Automation of Medicines and Medical Supplies

NMS is responsible for the Procurement, Storage, Distribution of medical supplies to all public health facilities in Uganda. The automation of the Procurement, Storage and Delivery of medical supplies is a measure (or performance indicator of GoU's ability to maintain a healthy and productive population that contributes to socio-economic growth and national development.

## Why implement NMS+?

The Government of Uganda adopted a National e-Government framework for the implementation of e-governance in the public sector including the health sector. The Ministry of Health developed, in 2016, a National e-Health Policy aimed at overseeing the effective utilization of ICT. The NMS+ System is a set of Enterprise Resource Planning tool – centralized database, self-service portal, suppliers and customers external portals, mobile applications, workflow notifications, approvals

management engine, secure access, that provides fully integrated business processes and business intelligence reporting capabilities

NMS+ represents a new way of doing business through the automation of most of the business processes aimed at procuring, storing and delivery of essential medicines and medical supplies

## NMS' Role in NMS+

The NMS+ project is an initiative of the Government of Uganda, implemented through NMS and supported by development partners (USAID).

NMS which is responsible for Procuring, Storing and Distribution of essential medicines and medical supplies is taking lead in the implementation of the NMS+ ERP. Other stakeholders include Ministry of Health which is responsible for the policy and implementation oversight, and NITA-U which is responsible for oversight of all national e-government initiatives

## NMS Mandate, Goal and Objectives

The National Medical Stores was established in 1993 by Act of Parliament under Chapter 207 of the Laws of Uganda. The objectives of Government, in establishing the Statutory Corporation, by law, were fivefold, namely to ensure;

- ◆ Efficient and economical procurement of medicines and of certain other medical supplies of good quality primarily to the public health services;

- ◆ Secure, safe and efficient storage, administration, distribution and supply of medicines and medical supplies, having regard to national needs and the special nature of the goods in question in accordance with the National Drug Policy and the National Drug Authority;
- ◆ The establishment and maintenance of systems to ensure the quality of goods supplied;
- ◆ The estimation of current and future needs as a basis for procurement planning and for budgeting by the Corporation itself and the Ministries concerned;
- ◆ The proper performance of additional tasks as may be accepted by the Board as complementary or necessary to the performance of its primary functions, and are entrusted to the Corporation by regulation.

## BENEFITS OF CLIENT SELF SERVICE PORTAL (CSSP)

- ▶ Currently health facilities have to wait for NMS Client Services to visit the Health Facility to view their procurement plans. CSSP will enable health facilities to view their procurement plans and budget utilization in real time at any time.
- ▶ With CSSP, Health facilities will be able to quickly create orders, review, and submit to NMS with limited human error.
- ▶ The CSSP notification functionality enables Health Facilities to receive notifications on ;

- i. Reminders for orders due in a cycle
- ii. Order status updates e.g. order submitted, order received, released to warehouse, picking and order shipped. This provides real time visibility in the order process
- ▶ Customers will be able to confirm receipt of items delivered against their orders, clearly indicating what was received versus what was ordered. As a result, NMS will better manage Backorder updates to the Health Facilities.
- ▶ The CSSP report functionality will enable health facilities to generate reports with quantitative and qualitative information.

## FAQS

### ▶ What is the NMS Client Self Service Portal (CSSP)?

CSSP is an online portal that will enable Health Facilities to manage their ordering process from National Medical Stores.

- ▶ Who will access the NMS + Client Self Service Portal ?
- ▶ How do I find my Procurement Plan?

The Health Facility can view its Procurement Plan on the portal. This Procurement Plan will be uploaded by NMS annually and cannot be edited in anyway.

- ▶ Who will be responsible for creating, submitting, and approving the Health Facility Order?
- ▶ Can a Health Facility cancel an order on the portal?

Once an order is submitted, it cannot be cancelled. The health

facility will be required to contact NMS Client Services to make changes to the order. The portal requests the user whether he/she is ready to submit the order, when the submit button is clicked.

Additionally, the portal has an inbuilt functionality to ensure that an order is only submitted when mandatory fields and accurate information has been provided.

### ▶ Does the portal allow the user to save order details created to be continued at a later date?

Users can return to an order to edit it at any time as long as it has not already been submitted to NMS

### ▶ Can a Health facility view its budget, utilization, and balance available?

Yes, the portal provides this information in real time

### ▶ Can the Portal be accessed offline?

The Client Self Service Portal can only be accessed with internet activity.

### ▶ Is there a mobile application for the Client Self Service Portal ?

There is no mobile application for the Client Self Service Portal. The portal can only be accessed on a desktop, laptop, or tablet with internet connectivity.

### ▶ How will emergency orders be handled in the Portal?

