Resource Planning Tools and Methods

Many developing countries lack capacity to use and evaluate the data and information to support strategic planning for health care services. As a result, planning is frequently based solely on historical data rather than an analysis of options to respond to future health care needs. Policymakers need increased capacity to project health care service requirements of populations and tools to help them analyze options for closing supply–requirements gaps.

As part of the health reform initiatives in Egypt, PHR developed a set of user-friendly computer tools to reinforce the analytic framework for strategic planning and assist policymakers in health resource planning, forecasting, and rationalization.

What resource planning tools were created?

▲ **Inpatient Bed Policy Simulation Model**: for planning and rationalizing inpatient hospital beds and forecasting construction priorities

▲ **Basic Benefits Simulation Model**: for planning primary care workforce, pharmaceuticals, and financing requirements for particular scenarios about covered benefits

▲ **Capital Project Clearinghouse Model**: for helping managers to implement rationalization plans for inpatient beds

▲ **Primary Care Performance Management System**: for managers to monitor practice patterns and financial performance of primary care clinics and providers

The planning and decision support software tools were developed in Microsoft Access, which makes them easily adaptable to the context and data of other countries.

What is the input and output of the software?

The software allows policymakers to define and analyze policy scenarios using health system data. Current population data and factors that influence future population size (like fertility rates) are used to forecast rural and urban populations. Population-based forecasts of resource requirements are made using data on morbidity, provider productivity, capacity utilization, new construction activities, and
training of new health workers.

PHR provided training in use of the software for strategic planning. The training allows the participants to:

▲ Understand the importance of population-based planning

▲ Set goals for service utilization and provider productivity

▲ Evaluate policy scenario and perform tests of the sensitivity of the results from the analyses to the assumptions used

▲ Understand the gap between service need and observed utilization

▲ Forecast facility construction needs

▲ Establish priorities for changing the supply of facilities, personnel, and supplies

▲ Overcome data limitations ▲

This article is one in a series that describes lessons learned in the Partnerships for Health Reform Project. The follow-on PHRplus Project is drawing on these lessons to familiarize country counterparts and USAID Missions with project skills and capabilities, which are significantly expanded by the PHRplus partnership, which now comprises Abt and nine partner organizations, as well as several affiliate organizations. As these papers are brief, they cannot include all possible approaches to specific country needs; therefore, we welcome reader comments and discussion. Send comments to PHR-InfoCenter@abtassoc.com