



KEMSA EQUAL TO TASK IN ENSURING A HEALTHY NATION

KENYA'S health sector has recently experienced a change of treatment protocol, marking a robust shift to better treatment regimens.

Toxicity and resistance to ineffective medicines has also rendered some drugs under the old treatment outdated.

Medicines with slow and unpredictable demand patterns are generally prone to expiry. The standard approach of ordering economic quantities to optimize stock levels only works for medicines with stable consumption and is unsuitable for those with erratic demand.

It is not lost on us on the various media reports concerning expiry of medicines.

The latest report by the Auditor General indicates that KEMSA stocked expired drugs worth Sh150 million as at the end of 2018 Financial Year.

This was misconstrued to mean that the Authority has been distributing expired drugs to public hospitals across the country to the detriment patients.

We wish to state that KEMSA has adopted effective Health Supply Chain Management as an approach of ensuring the Quality Standards of Health products and Technologies procured, warehoused and distributed by the Authority are upheld.

KEMSA procures in bulk enjoying economies of scale. This advantage trickles down to the pricing of products, thus making them more affordable and accessible to mwananchi.

In the spirit of devolution, KEMSA business model shifted from Push to Pull system, where some commodities attracted little or no demand from public health facilities, hence over time exhausted their shelf life and became obsolete.

During the period in question, there were changes in treatment regimens effected through policy and adoption of new technologies in health care from analogue to digital based diagnosis in radiology, which rendered X-rays films and processing chemicals obsolete.

The health sector experienced a change of treatment protocol marking a shift to better and more efficacious treatment regimens. Toxicity and resistance to other ineffective medicines also rendered some drugs under the old treatment outdated.

Medicines with slow and unpredictable demand patterns are generally prone to expiry. The standard approach of ordering economic quantities to optimize stock levels only works for medicines with stable consumption and is unsuitable for those with erratic demand.

The Authority has invested heavily on a web based Logistics Management Information System to make logistics decisions and manage the supply chain with focus on procurement planning, inventory management, data and product flow. This is backed by a Quality Assurance department, which monitors the shelf life of products within the warehousing online module, such that products with a six months lifespan cannot be distributed. Therefore, the issue of expired products leaving the KEMSA warehouse and ending up in public health facilities cannot arise.

Through demand and planning, KEMSA ensures accurate forecasting and quantifications are done according to the needs of the counties.

KEMSA has a robust distribution infrastructure consisting of its own fleet and outsourced transporters, who deliver medical commodities to the doorstep of all mapped public health facilities nationwide. The fleet is fitted with tracking devices to monitor movement and secure transparency. The safety of the commodities is assured as they move along the chain up to the point of delivery.

The biggest challenge KEMSA is experiencing is the erratic ordering of medical supplies, making it difficult to forecast future demand and the pending debts owed to the Authority by some counties which have negatively impacted on the cash flow.

County debts are dynamic as they accrue based on demand-driven procurements with majority of the counties claiming delays in disbursement of funds by treasury as a major impediment for them to clear their debts.

Despite these challenges, KEMSA is currently supplying over 750 products of essential medical supplies in the country but will soon increase to 2,000. The Authority is consistently reviewing demand from its customers.

KEMSA is working closely with National Government (MoH), National Medicines Therapeutic Committee, Pharmacy and Poisons Board and County Medicines Therapeutic Committee to do selection, forecasting and quantification to standardize therapeutic protocols.

The use of generic medicines will be encouraged to reduce cost of health care.

Leveraging on KEMSA's robust ICT platform will allow end-to-end visibility assuring that medicine leaves our warehouse to the patients.

Post market surveillance will also be amplified using a multi-agency approach to enforce quality.

Against all odds, we will stay committed to ensuring that essential, safe and cost-effective drugs are made available to the entire population of Kenya at the right time and in the right quantity.

By DR. JONAH MANJARI

Chief Executive Officer

Kenya Medical Supplies Authority