



## People that Deliver Newsflash

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## Special Message from Dr. Lloyd Matowe People that Deliver Coalition Chair

Dedicated to health supply chain professionals, those essential workers contributing to the overall success of the health supply chain

In this issue we celebrate the contributions of the health supply chain professional to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Health supply chain professionals are the essential workers who often remain behind the scenes and miss out on recognition for their efforts. Who is this essential worker? Pharmacists, logisticians, supply chain managers, data managers, warehouse, transport personnel, and many others – all of whom are collectively tasked to ensure the appropriate commodity selection, forecasting, procurement, storage, distribution and use of health products.



Dr. Lloyd Matowe

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, health supply chains are being challenged to deliver more products to a larger number of beneficiaries under increasingly limited conditions. In these unprecedented times, the health and safety of health supply chain workers weighs heavily on our minds. These frontline workers are an essential part of the global fight to curb the outbreak. PtD recognizes and fully supports the essential roles that the various health cadres play in assuring access to and proper use of health supplies. PtD and its coalition member organizations and country governments recognize that we cannot stop this pandemic without a competent, supported, and adequately staffed supply chain workforce that is deployed across the public and private sectors within the health system. It is now, more than ever, that we must all come together in support of the health supply chain workforce. Without them, the medical supplies and equipment needed to test and treat people will not be available. The clinical health staff treating patients every day in hospitals and clinics across the globe rely on the supplies that the health supply chain workforce delivers.

The global COVID-19 outbreak is leading to an acute and drastic shortage of essential supplies, including personal protective equipment, diagnostics and clinical management. On 10 April 2020, WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Ghebreyesus explained that the “supply chain may need to cover more than 30% of the world’s needs in the acute phase of the pandemic” and announced the creation of a [UN COVID-19 Supply Chain Task Force](#). The Task Force will be co-chaired by WHO and WFP and will provide strategic direction ensuring that supply chains are driven by strategic and tactical health and medical priorities and will establish a COVID-19 supply chain system to provide countries with essential supplies needed for their COVID-19 response.



In a health centre in Man, in the Western part of Côte d'Ivoire, UNICEF staff are busy distributing hygiene kits with soap and hand washing disposals to help people protect themselves against the Coronavirus.

All too often the health supply chain workforce is not considered when decisions are made to introduce new products into the health system. With the possible introduction of a new COVID-19 vaccine and repurposed medicines, specialized skills to ensure their quality, safety and efficacy and their efficient procurement and supply are needed. Once a drug is proved safe and effective, getting it to millions of patients around the world requires massive manufacturing and supply chain management capacity. Decisions to increase the availability of health commodities in a country must take into consideration the ability of the supply chain workforce to absorb the extra workload, which might require expanding the workforce, reorganizing the workforce to make it more efficient (PtD in partnership with IQVIA recently developed the workforce optimization tool, for more information please contact us), and providing education, training and professional development to address the needed technical competencies. Proper working conditions (see the Global Health Supply Chain-Procurement and Supplies Management (GHSC-PSM) Project's "[Keeping supply chain workers safe during a pandemic](#)"), including psychosocial support, must be made available to these workers. For example, guidance is needed in how to manage supply chains in the era of social distancing. More coordination is needed, at the global and country level, to pool resources, avoid duplication of efforts, and above all, address the needs of these workers who are doing everything they can to keep these supply chains working.

If you are a health supply chain professional in search of resources or guidance, we urge you to seek information only from credible sources, such as the World Health Organization, other UN agencies, such as UNICEF Supply Division, or through well-established online communities and professional associations, such as the International Association for Public Health Logisticians ([www.iaphl.org](http://www.iaphl.org)). PtD has a collated list of COVID-19 related resources pertinent to the health supply chain workforce. This list is available on the PtD website and will be updated on a regular basis: <https://peoplethatdeliver.org/ptd/resources/COVID-19>. As the fight against the pandemic continues, communication is critical. The [IAPHL](#) list serve and [Health Information for All](#) (HIFA) are good starting points, as is the [Logistic Cluster Supply Chain Inter-Agency Coordination Cell](#) (SCICC).

For policy makers and donors, we urge you to include considerations for health supply chain workers in your business continuity plans. Please consider staffing, skills, working conditions, and the motivation of your health supply chain workers ([see the PtD Theory of Change](#)). Make sure budgets include adequate funding for any additional training or equipment necessary. Refer to the WHO's [COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan](#) which outlines operational planning guidelines to support country preparedness and response. Deploy digital solutions when appropriate and coordinate with involved stakeholders to ensure transparency and alignment across all ongoing efforts.

PtD envisions a world where health supply chain workforces are empowered and equipped to optimize health outcomes by improving access to health. In the context of COVID-19, PtD's dedication to our mission remains, as difficult as it may seem to many of us. I remain positive that as the PtD community works to combat COVID-19 we will all do our part to support the health supply chain workforce in every way we can. On behalf of PtD, we wish everyone to remain healthy and safe.

For more information on the importance of the health supply chain workforce, see PtD's [advocacy brief](#). We will soon be sharing with you a new brief with guidelines and best practices for the COVID-19 response.

# People that Deliver COVID-19 Grand Challenge for Health Supply Chains

On 17 April 2020 PtD was awarded a grant from the [FIA Foundation](#) specifically for work in last mile health supply chain support for COVID-19 response. The FIA Foundation is an independent UK-registered charity which supports an international program of activities promoting road safety, the environment and sustainable mobility, as well as funding motor sport safety research.

PtD will use this catalytic funding to implement a Grand Challenge, which is a grant model that is used to promote innovation in global health research. Through the Grand Challenge, PtD will seek solutions to critical health commodity transportation and logistics challenges that have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in sub-Saharan African countries, especially at the last-mile. This will provide critical seed funding for transportation and logistics organizations with operations in sub-Saharan Africa that are providing support to the COVID-19 response in their communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has expanded across national and continental boundaries and is an infectious disease that impacts all populations. It is a huge challenge to populations, especially in low and middle-income countries that have fragile health systems. Equally challenging are the in-country logistics which are being disrupted as countries are choosing total lockdown to control the spread of the virus.



When a fast-moving pandemic occurs, people, systems and supplies must be ready to respond immediately. All the critical items needed for a pandemic intervention must be transported from around the world to the operation locations. Transport capacity may be much reduced. Even where trucks are plentiful, drivers may be in short supply — either because many are sick or because quarantine rules prevent them from going to work. Bringing the critical items into the country and getting them to where they are needed in the field will be challenging.

In the development community we talk a lot about the "last-mile." The "last-mile" is a critical logistical challenge for healthcare and other essential items to communities most in need across sub-Saharan Africa. The final short journeys in poorly connected areas to directly reach those in need can be difficult. It is a challenge amplified by the speed and severity of the COVID-19 pandemic, meaning that delays can make the difference between life and death.

The FIA Foundation's investment in last mile logistics and transportation for COVID-19 response aligns with PtD's mission, which is to promote stewardship and leadership at the national level to address the health supply chain workforce needs and advocating for the development of a competent, supported supply chain workforce deployed across the public and private sectors within the health system.

More information on how interested organizations can apply to the Request for Proposal (RFP) will be announced soon via the UNICEF and PtD websites, social media and through PtD's coalition member organizations. Read the press release on the FIA Foundation's website [here](#).

## Update on the PtD Global Indaba and online events

At the beginning of March 2020, PtD in partnership with IAPHL, Intrahealth International, Pharmaceutical Systems Africa, and SAPICS announced the PtD Global Indaba: A forum on Human Resources for Health



Supply Chain Management scheduled for September of this year. In light of the current travel restrictions stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic and given the shifting priorities for most of our Coalition members and partners, the PtD Global Indaba Steering Committee decided to postpone this event until September 2021.

Our announcement for the PtD Global Indaba was received with great enthusiasm, as many of you recognized the value of an international forum with a dedicated focus on HR for SCM. Before the world was turned upside down by the COVID-19 pandemic, the theme for the event was "HR for SCM the missing link to maximizing supply chain performance." During these turbulent times, PtD and its coalition members feel that this topic is more relevant than ever.

PtD plans to continue the momentum for this event through a series of online events leading up to 2021. Our first online event in partnership with Chemonics will focus on COVID-19 and the considerations for the health supply chain workforce (the date of the webinar will be announced soon), with subsequent events focused on topics suggested by the larger PtD network (date of the webinar will be announced soon). That is why the Steering Committee has decided to keep the call for abstracts open for submissions. We think this is one way that we can hear from a variety of stakeholders who are passionate about the health supply chain workforce and who have expertise and knowledge that can benefit the greater community. Please go to the [PtD Global Indaba Event Website](#) to download the abstract submission form and follow the instructions for submission. Selected submissions may be included in online events or held for the in-person event next year. Follow PtD on [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#) to stay informed about our upcoming online events.



SEPTEMBER 2021

# PtD GLOBAL INDABA

A Forum on Human Resources for Health Supply Chain Management

**Accepting abstract submissions**

[ptdevents.org.za](http://ptdevents.org.za)

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