

FAMILY PLANNING PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN



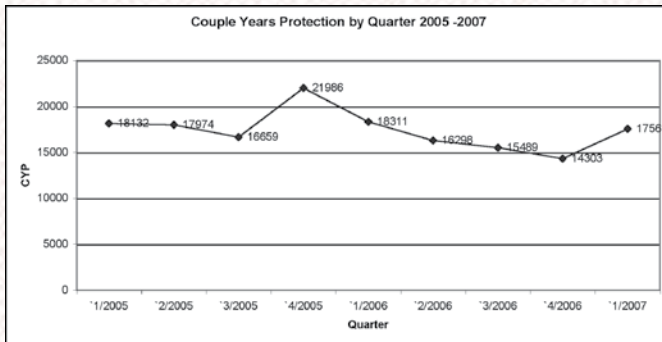
A brass band with thumping drums and blaring horns leads a vibrant procession of health promoters down the main street in Odoben, a small town in Ghana's Central Region. Local youth carry hand-lettered banners, some reading *Happy Families Plan Births* or *Don't Feel Shy; Ask for Free Information Today* while nurses distribute brochures on long-acting and permanent methods of contraception (LA/PMs). A van follows, its loudspeakers announcing a *durbar* (community meeting) on family planning to be held later that morning. Local leaders, health staff, and about 200 community members attend the meeting, seated under canopies bedecked with fluttering banners proclaiming, *Your Nurse Is Ready to Discuss Family Planning*. They listen attentively as health providers and satisfied clients discuss why

Quality Health Partners (QHP) is a five-year USAID project based in Accra, Ghana. QHP is designed to provide evidence-based support to the Ghana Health Service and a range of private institutions to improve the quality of health services in 30 of Ghana's most deprived districts and in other areas identified as priorities for HIV/AIDS and malaria, thereby contributing to improved health among Ghanaians, particularly in the areas of Reproductive and Child Health.

family planning is so important and what services and methods are available. This launch event, organized by the Odoben Health Center, is just one part of a comprehensive **Family Planning Promotional Campaign** carried out by the Ghana Health Service (GHS) with the support of Quality Health Partners (QHP). The campaigns are taking place in 32 districts in seven regions of Ghana.

Trends in Family Planning: Despite investments in family planning in Ghana, many challenges persist. Indicators of family planning use have declined steadily in Ghana, according to National Health Service data, reaching a low point in 2006 and then slightly increasing in early 2007. This same trend is reflected in the data from QHP's target districts (see graph at left). Factors explaining this decline include loss of trained LA/PM providers, low demand for family planning services, stock-outs of family planning commodities (in part due to the phase-out of the Norplant implant and its replacement with Jadelle), and lack of coverage of LAPM services under the National Health Insurance Scheme.

Improving Progress in Family Planning: The Family Planning Promotional Campaign, along with other efforts, is energizing progress to achieve family planning targets. Begun in May 2008, this campaign aims to improve and link supply and demand for family planning, particularly LA/PMs, in selected districts and towns. Campaigns include a number of activities, such as the launch event in Odoben, and take about two months to conduct. Before the campaign begins, efforts are made to improve provider performance and the quality of



care in health facilities. District health providers are trained or retrained in LA/PMs, including insertion of intrauterine devices (IUDs) and Jadelle implant (which replaces Norplant in Ghana) and performance of female and male sterilization. On-the-job training enables health providers to identify and overcome barriers to high-quality services such as lack of supplies or problems with confidentiality. Family planning services in clinics are clearly signposted, and waiting rooms are supplied with informational leaflets.

The Family Planning Promotional Campaign engages communities in synergistic communication activities to improve access to services. Family planning service providers and satisfied clients are oriented by GHS and QHP on their roles and responsibilities during the campaign. Local radio health talk shows provide a forum for health providers to speak on family planning topics and answer listeners' questions. Family planning messages and short dramas are broadcast on radio and recorded on CDs that are then played in clinic waiting rooms. Dramas performed in local languages describe the advantages of family planning and address incorrect information and beliefs about LA/PMs (for example, rumors that IUDs travel through the body or cause cancer). Launch events, including processions and *durbars*, are held with the support of elected and traditional leaders and other opinion leaders.

Successful family planning promotional community launch events have benefited from careful planning and timing. According to Ms. Janet Tornui, QHP Family Planning Specialist, launches have been most successful when coordinated with existing maternal and child health care clinics and when held on days that respect the local agricultural calendar. GHS and QHP are also working to ensure the availability of family planning equipment and commodities at service delivery sites participating in the campaign.

Achieving Results in Family Planning: Accra's Ridge Hospital has made tremendous strides to improve service delivery in family planning, and staff are now in full swing to prepare the family planning promotional campaign. Mavis Apatu, Family Planning Trainer and Senior Nursing Officer at the hospital, is clearly determined to improve family planning client satisfaction. A new procedures room has reduced client waiting time and increased privacy. More choices of contraceptive methods (including LA/PMs) are now available. Improved interpersonal counseling is given by nurses. Mavis uses visual aids (produced with the support of EngenderHealth) and testimonies from satisfied clients to prove how the methods work. According to Mavis, "*(With) proper counseling, you'll allay anxiety and dispel myths—and clients will come.*"

During Regional Health Reviews held in February 2009, GHS staff shared anecdotal information that indicators for family planning are improving. For example, Accra's Ridge Hospital Health Review report shows a 40% increase in the number of family planning clients in 2008 compared with 2007. A formal evaluation, to be completed in May 2009 by QHP and GHS, will provide further insight on the effectiveness of the Family Planning Promotional Campaign.

For more information, please visit QHP's website: www.GhanaQHP.org.