Optimizing HRH Investment Using Evidence from Workload Indicators of Staffing Needs (WISN) and Health Labor Market Analysis (HLMA) in Ethiopia

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1. Context
- Evidence-based workforce planning and deployment decisions can play an important role in addressing workforce shortage, maldistribution, and skill mix imbalance to ensure more equitable health workforce distribution.
- Root causes of inequitable health workforce coverage link both to persistent health workforce shortages and a lack of data on current distribution and coverage.
- The use of WISN and HLMA has developed national capacity for improving health workforce policies and actions, especially by generating evidence on workload, health workers demand and supply, and financial capability to improve health service access and quality.

2. Activities
- Consultations were conducted with decision makers and stakeholders to accept the methodology and results.
- Technical task force and implementation group were established from MOH, professional associations, WHO and development partners and trained on WISN and HLMA methods in 2021.
- A WISN assessment was conducted to determine adequate staffing levels, identify staffing gaps and forecast required staffing numbers based on actual workload.

3. Impacts
- The WISN and HLMA assessments guided revision of national health facility standards, which will result in significant improvements in staffing, and more equitable health workforce distribution.
- The new staffing standards have the potential to create an additional 109,008 posts for the 7 major health cadres, representing a 50% increase from the current level.
- The additional posts require an extra budget of 12.6 Billion Ethiopian Birr (US$ 378 Million) per year and the data is being used to advocate for increased HRH financing.
- Workload components and service standard were designed for medical doctors, nurses, midwives, medical laboratory professionals, health officers, pharmacy, and anesthesia professionals as a result of WISN assessment findings.

4. Evidence
- The USAID funded HWIP in collaboration with the MOH organized a high-level national advocacy meeting to disseminate revised health facility staffing standards and urge regional health leaders and managers to increase budget and hire additional health workers.
- As a result of revising health facility staffing standard and high-level national advocacy made to by-in the attention of health sector managers and regulatory bodies, 6,988 health professionals are hired in 2023 that increases the number of total health workers from 212,058 to 221,046.