

SECRET

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**MEMORANDUM OF THE HONORABLE COMMISSIONER OF HEALTH, JIGAWA STATE ON
INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF COMMUNITY BASED MASAKI NUTRITION INITIATIVE (CMNI)**

1. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform Council on the institutionalization of Community based Masaki Nutrition Initiative (CMNI) and to encourage states to adopt and implement the initiative in order to reduce the menace of childhood malnutrition.

2. BACKGROUND:

Nutrition plays a significant role in child's growth. The nutritional status of children in the first 1000 days of life is critical for survival and future cognitive functions. The ultimate consequence of acute malnutrition is stunting if the child survives. Stunting in early childhood has been documented to result in impaired behaviour later in life. Globally, there are over 165 million children affected with chronic malnutrition out of which up to 3.1 million die annually. From 1990 to 2015, most regions of the world are recording declining numbers of stunted children, however, this is not the case for the sub Saharan Africa which according to Black, Cesar, Susan, Zulfikar, Parul, Mercedes de, Majid, et. al. (2013), rate of stunting is actually increasing (45.7% in 1990 to 58.1 in 2015).

With a national average of 32% stunting rate, Nigeria accounts for 7% of the global burden of stunting, which is only second to India, (Tigga, Sen & Mondal, 2015). There is wide variation in child malnutrition within the various regions of Nigeria, for example, a south eastern state has stunting rate of 7%, which is far better than the national average (Nigeria SMART Survey report, 2013) while Jigawa state on the other hand, like many other states in the north, has unacceptably very high stunting rates (Nigeria SMART Survey report, 2015). The variation is related to a number of factors including disparity in the level of education, income and socio cultural characteristics (Senbanjo, Oshikoya, Odusanya, & Njokanma, 2011).

4. JUSTIFICATION:

The current approaches of addressing childhood malnutrition in Nigeria are expensive and mostly unsustainably donor driven, there is therefore the need for pro-poor strategies to overcome this challenge. Mothers and care givers still lack knowledge and skills for successful child feeding, including healthy weaning, complementary, supplementary as well as exclusive breast-feeding practices (Nigeria NDHS Report, 2013). Geographical, socioeconomic as well as financial accesses have been identified to pose unbreakable barriers to health facility-based nutrition programs. The global economic recession that is affecting many nations around the world calls for the deployment of low cost intervention for the improvement of nutritional status. Institutionalization of Community Masaki Nutrition Initiative (CMNI) can go a long way in not only reducing childhood malnutrition but also preventing it.

In response to this high burden of high level of stunting, the Jigawa State PHCDA is piloting the institutionalization of CMNI in some communities. The aim of CMNI is to promote community growth monitoring and the deployment of the right interventions for children with growth faltering by the mothers and care-givers themselves within the community. The program involves the following stages

1. Community gate keeping processes
2. Identification of community resources

3. Nutrition baseline assessment using simple MUAC measurement
4. Identification and listing of all mothers with children under the age of five
5. Training of community nutrition champions on growth monitoring using MUAC tapes, preparation of local recipes and referral
6. Conduct of bimonthly growth monitoring
7. Data management using pictorials
8. The project is currently running in three communities in Jahun LGA and already yielding interesting results.

5. CONTENT:

Studies have shown that around 80 percent of babies are exclusively breastfed on discharge from baby-friendly hospitals. However this percentage drops significantly to 49 percent six weeks after birth, and then as low as 16.7 percent at six months. The Community Masaki Nutrition Initiative (CMNI) plays an important role in creating supportive breastfeeding services in the community, just as Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) has in maternity services.

All communities participating in the CMNI are being supported by the closest local health facility; the facility in charge or any trained health worker attend the bimonthly growth monitoring session at the community. The officer records the data, guides the mothers of the best recipe to adopt for the level of the malnutrition each child has and takes over the management of very sick children at the facility level including referrals. CMNI is intended to make sure that there is consistent standard of breastfeeding knowledge and Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) skills to be available for women and their families in the wider community, so that they will be encouraged to initiate and continue breastfeeding, and to also monitor the growth of their children themselves.

6. KEY STRATEGIES:

- a. Advocacy: This would target community gate-keepers and opinion leaders to provide enabling environment for the practice of exclusive breastfeeding at farm, home and market.
- b. Pooling of local resources (food items) to provide support for very poor caregivers.
- c. Teaching mothers and caregivers on how to use locally available food items to prepare highly nutritional delicacies for their children.
- d. Sensitization of mothers and caregivers on the benefit of child growth monitoring and nutrition interventions.
- e. Peer support program: Women who exclusively breast-fed would be engaged in health education campaigns so as to convince others who are still contemplating.
- f. Provision of other health promotion interventions such as immunization, water and sanitation, acute care programs etc.

PRAYERS:

The Council is hereby invited to note this laudable initiative and to encourage states to adopt the CMNI strategy in order to reduce the menace of childhood malnutrition.

Honourable Commissioner for Health, Jigawa State,

June 2018.