

SECRET

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MEMORANDUM OF THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF HEALTH ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF TECHNICAL SUPPORT UNIT IN THE NPHCDA TO PROVIDE ROBUST AND SUSTAINABLE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO THE STATE PRIMARY HEALTH CARE BOARDS

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform the Council on the introduction of technical support programme by the National Primary Health Care Development Agency for the State Primary Health Care Boards, and to seek Council's approval for the establishment of a technical support unit in the DPRS of each SPHCDA and the FCT.

BACKGROUND:

The National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA) is a parastatal of Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Health with the mandate to develop and promote primary health care in Nigeria by ensuring the control of preventable diseases, improved access to basic health services, improved quality of care, development of a high-performing health workforce, strengthening of primary care institutions, partnerships, and community engagement. The agency achieves its goals by providing technical support for implementing the National Health Policy and mobilizing resources for the strengthening of primary health care (PHC), among others. However, due to limited resources and technical capacity and an absence of a system for coordination and tracking of technical assistance (TA) requests and delivery, NPHCDA has been unable to effectively fulfil its mandate of providing TA to State Primary Health Care Development Agencies (SPHCDA) across the country.

Repositioning NPHCDA to fulfil its institutional mandates of providing technical support to States requires the development of a sustainable system for providing, coordinating and tracking State-level technical assistance.

Therefore, NPHCDA will develop a sustainable system for providing State-level technical assistance, and enable it to fulfil and operationalize its core mandate of strengthening PHC systems and services across the country.

CONTENT:

Currently, interactions between NPHCDA and States for Technical Assistance requests and fulfillment are very complex and there are too many players involved in communicating Technical Assistance needs between SPHCBs and NPHCDA using a mix of formal and informal communication channels. The implications of these are lacks of clarity on what SPHCB needs are and this hampers the ability of the NPHCDA to respond to SPHCB's Technical Assistance needs effectively and efficiently.

There is also weak coordination of TA provided to SPHCBs via available in-house and external resources due to poor coordination of technical support within NPHCDA and fragmented TA delivery channels. The effects of these are inefficient and ineffective use of available resources for TA delivery as efforts are duplicated on some states and some states are completely neglected. Likewise, no transparency into TA provided by resource persons resulting in non-standardization of TA and limited opportunities for continuous quality improvement.

The Technical Support Program (TSP) design is premised on 4 principles:

1. Owned and driven by NPHCDA

The program will be anchored by NPHCDA staff to ensure institutionalization and sustainability.

2. Built on existing resources and structure

The TSP will be domiciled in existing departments at both National and State level (DPRS) and staffed by career civil servants.

3. Balance of customization and scale intervention

Efforts will be made to deploy technical assistance that meets each state's specific needs, but consideration will be given to approaches that benefit multiple states.

4. Inclusive of all stakeholders

Knowledge and human capital inputs from appropriate departments within the Agency, its development partners and SPHCDA's will be included as TA resources.

PRAYERS:

The Council is invited to note as follows:

- I. The introduction of a technical support programme by NPHCDA to address the technical needs of the SPHCBS;
- II. NPHCDA will deliver TA to SPHCBS using a number of different approaches (On site consultation, sharing of knowledge resources and peer to peer learning among SPHCBS; and
- III. Technical Assistance needs identification will be done at both National and State levels.

Council is further invited to approve that each SPHCDA and FCT establish a technical support unit in the Department of Planning, Research and Statistics to identify and collate TA needs.

Honourable Minister of Health

JUNE, 2018.