Proposal for a joint panel at the 7th Global Health Supply Chain Summit
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Title: Strengthening Professionalism among Supply Chain Cadres: A Key Enabler of Performance Improvement

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ii. Description

Context and Motivation
Health care activities are carried out by standard professions – doctors, pharmacists, laboratory scientists, nurses and paramedics who benefit from defined professional competency frameworks. These frameworks provide the basis for professional recognition and for professional associations that have significant medical and social influence¹. However, non-medical functions on which health care professionals depend—in particular, those working in supply chain management to procure and deliver health commodities and equipment—generally lack a common professional identity and defined professional competency framework (particularly in the development context). Most people working in health commodity logistics in the developing country context, especially at the service delivery point, are trained health care workers (HCWs)—pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and nurses—for whom managing health commodities is a secondary and burdensome responsibility. These HCWs are also in short supply, so using the available cadres to manage supply chains diverts these highly skilled and valuable workers from their primary duties. Trained supply chain personnel, with the requisite competencies and professional credentials and recognition, are a critical need at every level of the supply chain to improve performance and in mitigating HCW shortages at the service delivery point.

The CapacityPlus project, funded by USAID, is working with WHO and other Human Resources for Health (HRH) stakeholders to improve professionalization across the global health sector, including public health supply chain cadres. In the humanitarian sector—particularly food programs and disaster response—a similar effort is underway to professionalize logistics personnel, lead by the Humanitarian Logistics Association in partnership with the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport in the UK.

As a stepping stone to an increasing professional approach to health supply chain management PtD published the ‘Health Supply Chain Competency Compendium’ in 2014, with additional material regarding its application from a country case study in Namibia.

Methodology & Work Timeline
Each presenter will address methodology and timeline. In general, professionalization follows a life-cycle encompassing secondary education, pre-service education, graduate certification, initial employment, career progression and incentives, and continuing professional development. Each of the presenters will address one or more of these elements, as described in the Outline of the Session below.

iii. Outline of the Session (45 minutes)
   a. Introduction and framing: Andrew Brown, 5 minutes.
   b. Professionalization Framework: Rebecca Bailey, 8 minutes
   c. RESOLOG activities and assessment results in five regions: Benoit Silva, 5 minutes
   d. IAPHL’s present and future contribution to professionalization: Lea Teclemariam, 5 minutes
   e. HLA’s efforts to establish a global competency and certification framework, 5 minutes
   f. Discussion, 17 minutes

Introduction and Framing
Andrew Brown will briefly describe the context and problems associated with the lack of professional supply chain cadres. He will briefly discuss how the People that Deliver initiative is addressing this need, highlighting a case study from Namibia, and then introduce the other presenters. Andrew will also moderate the panel and discussion.

a. Professionalization Framework
[A complete abstract has been submitted directly by CapacityPlus and is summarized here]. The presenter, Rebecca Bailey, will position supply chain professionalization with the broader human resources for health (HRH context. She will define health workers to encompass not only physicians, nurses and midwives, but also health systems managers, health information specialists, social welfare workers, community health workers, pharmacists, laboratory technicians and supply chain management professionals, among others. These under-recognized cadres often lack support and a voice in the health system, hindering their education, career development and professional growth. She will then present the Professionalization Life Cycle Approach, which has been developed to systematically address all the crucial steps in the professionalization of under-recognized health worker cadres. This approach develops a viable track for health workers from the point of their entry to secondary school to aspects of continuing professional development. Additional information can be found at http://www.capacityplus.org/files/resources/under-recognized-cadres-overview.pdf
b. **RESOLOG**

The presenter, Benoît Silva will make a short introduction of the goal and objectives of RESOLOG; he will then provide an update of the network’s activities. In particular, he will present the results of a study conducted in 5 African health regions (Saint-Louis and Matam in Senegal, Hauts-Bassins and Cascades in Burkina Faso, Atsinanana in Madagascar). It assessed the organization and management of logistic assets (infrastructures, equipment, IT, vehicles etc.) and of medical waste in health programmes and structures. It also identified the profiles of the human resources in charge of those logistic functions. A summary of the study is available on RESOLOG’s website: [http://www.resolog.org/content/etude-sur-les-fonctions-logistiques-des-structures-et-programmes-de-sant%C3%A9-dans-5-r%C3%A9gion](http://www.resolog.org/content/etude-sur-les-fonctions-logistiques-des-structures-et-programmes-de-sant%C3%A9-dans-5-r%C3%A9gion). For now it is in French. The English version should be available mid-September.

c. **IAPHL**

[A complete abstract has been submitted directly by IAPHL and is summarized here] The presenter, Lea Tclemariam, will briefly introduce the International Association of Public Health Logisticians, and describe IAPHL’s present and future contribution to professionalization in the public sector health supply chain management. The main goal of the association is engaging existing members and attracting a diverse group of new members. Consequently, expanding the portfolio of professional development activities and maintaining the quality of these services remain at the core of the association. Membership has grown from 120 in October 2007 to 2,656 in June 2014 in 114 countries, with increasing member engagement. Members have been actively participating in the discussions on the listserv, and in the past year alone the association has received 50 or more contributions per month consistently for 10 out of the 12 months. Out of the 160 respondents to the 2014 annual survey, 73% reported that the association has increased their SCM knowledge. These results show that IAPHL has brought recognition and made contribution towards professionalization of health SCM in the public sector. Future contribution to professionalization will involve resolving a number of questions such as the measurement of the effectiveness of its professional development activities, sustainability and inclusion of potential non-English speaking members.

d. **HLA**

Becky Turner will describe the Humanitarian Logistics Association and discuss its efforts to establish a global competency and certification framework that is recognized at the global and national levels. HLA is an association of logistics professionals committed to humanitarian logistics effectiveness by creating opportunities for dialogue and cooperative relationships with its members and partners to build a community of practice for advancing the humanitarian logistics profession through the promotion of cross organizational learning and collaboration. The current system for recognizing knowledge and skills of humanitarian workers strongly favours international staff. Limited professional development funding for national staff is often wasted, as there is no accepted system to measure competencies or training effectiveness. HLA is working to create a new system to capture, recognise and certify the skills, learning and development of aid workers. HLA is advocating for development of an internationally recognized Learning and Development Passport for humanitarian logisticians, which can be extended to include other related sectors such as public health logisticians. The next steps for professionalizing the
humanitarian logistics workforce are to stimulate greater advocacy, buy-in, recognition and endorsement for certification in the mainstream humanitarian assistance and development sectors.

iv. Discussion
This panel proposal directly relates to the conference themes of improving performance and better aligning incentives among the different entities in the supply chain. SCM personnel who see a clear career path and professional recognition as a valued cadre will have a strong incentive to pursue continuing education and professional credentials. Competency-based education and credentialing will help improve individual and overall supply chain performance. Participants will gain a greater appreciation for the need to professionalize the SCM workforce, the steps being taken to define professionalization within the public health supply chain context, and resources available to SCM personnel who wish to pursue professional credentials.