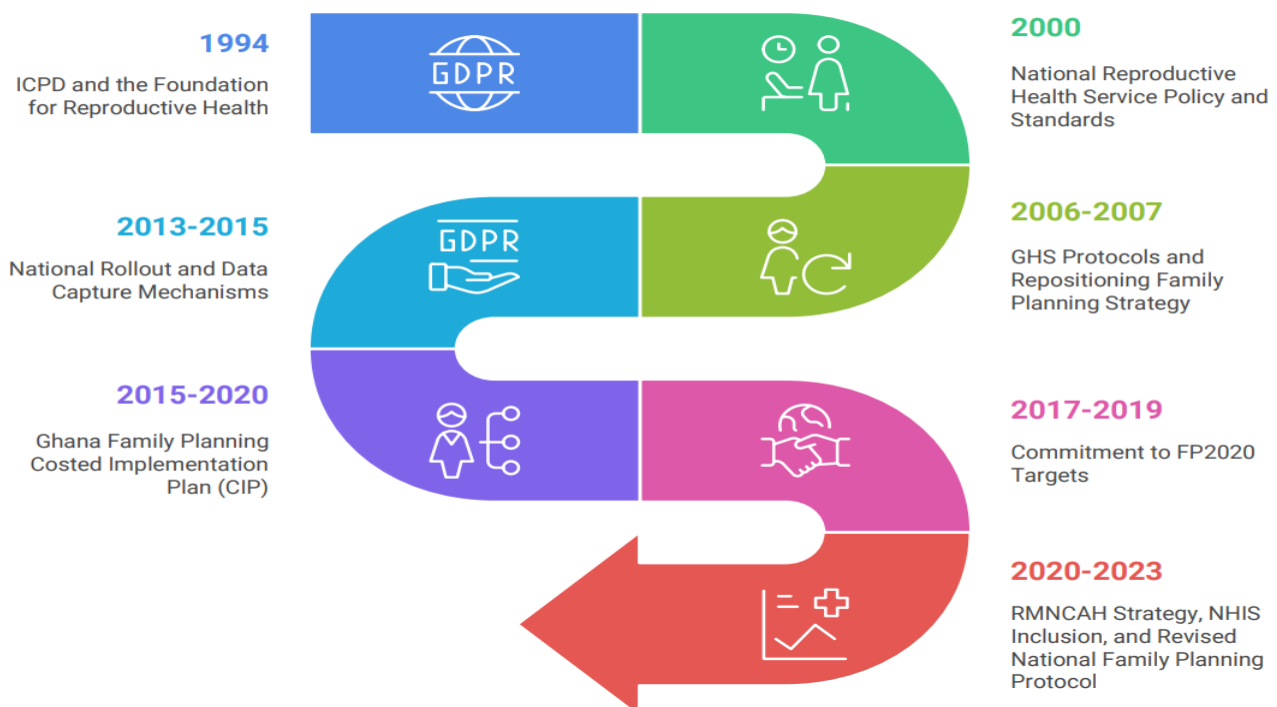


Historical Policy Evolution of Reproductive Health and Postpartum Family Planning in Ghana

INTRODUCTION

This Factsheet outlines the historical evolution of Reproductive Health policies in Ghana. It highlights key milestones and strategic shifts from 1994 to 2023, demonstrating Ghana's increasing commitment to integrating family planning services, particularly Postpartum Family Planning (PPFP), into its broader reproductive health framework. The evolution showcases progression from initial international commitments to concrete national policies, implementation plans, and service delivery strategies aimed at improving maternal and child health outcomes through enhanced access to postpartum contraception.

Ghana's Journey in Reproductive Health and Family Planning



THE EVOLUTION

1994: ICPD and the foundation for Reproductive Health

Ghana's participation in the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo marked a pivotal moment. The conference emphasized the importance of reproductive health and family planning as fundamental human rights and essential components of national development. The ICPD's Programme of Action provided a framework for Ghana to prioritize reproductive health services at the national level, laying the groundwork for

future policies and programs focused on family planning, including postpartum family planning. The conference underscored the need for a holistic approach to reproductive health, encompassing not only family planning but also maternal health, safe motherhood, and the prevention of sexually transmitted infections. This comprehensive perspective influenced subsequent policy development in Ghana, shaping the integration of family planning into broader healthcare services.

2000: National Reproductive Health Service Policy and Standards

In 2000, Ghana launched the National Reproductive Health Service Policy and Standards. The policy introduced comprehensive guidelines that embedded family planning into maternal health services. The integration was a significant step towards ensuring that women had access to family planning information and services during and after pregnancy. The policy provided a framework for healthcare providers to offer family planning counseling and services as part of routine maternal health care, including antenatal care, delivery, and postpartum care. By integrating family planning into maternal health services, the policy aimed to improve maternal and child health outcomes, reduce unintended pregnancies, and empower women to make informed decisions about their reproductive health.

2006-2007: GHS Protocols and Repositioning Family Planning Strategy

Between 2006 and 2007, the Ghana Health Service (GHS) updated its protocols to include postpartum family planning counseling. The update ensured that healthcare providers were trained and equipped to provide comprehensive family planning information and services to women in the postpartum period. Concurrently, the Repositioning Family Planning Strategy was launched to reduce unmet contraceptive needs, particularly in the postpartum period. The strategy focused on increasing awareness of family planning options, improving access to services, and addressing barriers to contraceptive use. The strategy also emphasized the importance of involving men in family planning decisions and promoting male participation in contraceptive use. By addressing unmet contraceptive needs in the postpartum period, the strategy aimed to reduce unintended pregnancies and improve maternal and child health outcomes.

2013-2015: National Rollout and Data Capture Mechanisms

From 2013 to 2015, Ghana carried out a national initiative to incorporate PPFP counselling into maternal and child health services. The initiative ensured that PPFP services were accessible in all healthcare facilities across the nation. Formal mechanisms for data collection were also set up in family planning registers to support the monitoring and expansion of PPFP services. These mechanisms enabled healthcare providers to record the number of women receiving PPFP counselling and services, as well as the types of contraceptive methods used. The data was utilized to track the progress of the PPFP programme, pinpoint areas needing improvement, and guide policy decisions. The national initiative and data collection systems were vital for maintaining the sustainability and effectiveness of the PPFP programme.

2015-2020: Ghana Family Planning Costed Implementation Plan (CIP)

The Ghana Family Planning Costed Implementation Plan (CIP) for 2015-2020 provided a detailed plan and resource framework for scaling up family planning services, including PPFP. The plan outlined specific activities, timelines, and resource requirements for expanding access to family planning services across the country. It included strategies for increasing the availability of contraceptive methods, training healthcare providers, and raising awareness of family planning options. The CIP also included updated policies in 2015 that further strengthened the strategic focus on postpartum contraception. These policies emphasized the importance of providing women with a range of contraceptive options in the postpartum period, including long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARCs). The CIP was a critical tool for mobilizing resources and coordinating efforts to improve family planning services in Ghana.

2017-2019: Commitment to FP2020 Targets

Ghana's commitment to FP2020 targets aligned with expansion efforts such as scaling up long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARCs) access as integral to postpartum care. FP2020 was a global partnership that aimed to expand access to voluntary family planning information, services, and supplies to an additional 120 million women and girls in the world's poorest countries by 2020. Ghana's commitment to FP2020 demonstrated its dedication to improving family planning services and empowering women to make informed decisions about their reproductive health. The scaling up of LARC access as integral to postpartum care was a key strategy for achieving FP2020 targets. LARCs, such as intrauterine devices (IUDs) and implants, are highly effective and long-lasting contraceptive methods that can be inserted immediately after childbirth. By increasing access to LARCs in the postpartum period, Ghana aimed to reduce unintended pregnancies and improve maternal and child health outcomes.

2020-2023: RMNCAH Strategy, NHIS Inclusion, and Revised National Family Planning Protocol

From 2020 to 2023, the Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) Strategy and the inclusion of PPFP services under the National Health

Insurance Scheme (NHIS) increased service accessibility and sustainability.

The RMNCAH Strategy provided a comprehensive framework for improving the health of women and children across the continuum of care, from pregnancy to adolescence.

The inclusion of PPFP services under the NHIS made these services more affordable and accessible to women, particularly those from low-income households. The 2023 Revised National Family Planning Protocol reaffirmed the prioritization of PPFP within Ghana's reproductive health framework. This protocol provided updated guidelines for healthcare providers on how to provide PPFP counseling and services, ensuring that women receive high-quality care. The RMNCAH Strategy, NHIS inclusion, and Revised National Family Planning Protocol collectively contributed to increasing access to PPFP services and improving maternal and child health outcomes in Ghana.

CONCLUSION

Ghana's policy trajectory demonstrates a commitment to embedding postpartum family planning as a critical element of reproductive health. Continued implementation of integrated, well-funded, and monitored PPFP services will be vital to meeting national and global family planning goals and improving maternal and child health outcomes.



9 Apple Street, East Legon

www.arhr.org.gh

contact.us@arhr.org.gh