

## What is USP DQI?

**United States Pharmacopeia (USP)** is a nonprofit, nongovernmental, standard-setting organization that advances public health by ensuring the quality and consistency of medicines, promoting the safe and proper use of medications, and verifying ingredients in dietary supplements. These standards, which are recognized worldwide, are developed by a unique process of public involvement through the contributions of volunteers representing pharmacy, medicine, and other health care professions, as well as science, academia, government, the pharmaceutical industry, and consumer organizations.

**USP Drug Quality and Information Program**, a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) that USP has managed since October 2000, provides technical assistance in the drug quality assurance and objective drug information that are essential to ensure positive, cost-effective outcomes from the use of pharmaceuticals.

Working cooperatively with national governments and health professionals in all four regions of USAID intervention, USP DQI strives to facilitate and strengthen drug quality systems and information access, thus improving public health. USP DQI encourages collaborative efforts to meet this goal by offering technical assistance; developing training programs for medicine testing methods, drug registration procedures, and GMP compliance; and setting up drug information centers.

In the field, USP DQI staff train health care workers to better test, use, and regulate medicines; develop and disseminate unbiased drug and therapeutic information; provide scientific evidence for health care decision-making; and provide training for physicians, pharmacists, and nurses in drug information and pharmacovigilance to help improve drug dispensing and ensure competence and accountability.

Currently, USP DQI has established a presence or sponsored activities in —

- ◆ **Asia and the Near East** – Bangladesh, Cambodia, Laos, Nepal, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, and Yunnan Province of China
- ◆ **Latin America and the Caribbean** – Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, and Venezuela
- ◆ **Europe and Eurasia** – Moldova, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Romania, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan
- ◆ **Sub-Saharan Africa** – Ghana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Senegal, and Uganda



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USP DQI focuses on four areas common to all USAID health objectives:

- ◆ **Ensuring Drug Quality:** USP DQI improves drug quality assurance by working with local governments, USAID missions, WHO and other partners to evaluate a country's readiness and capacity to provide necessary drug quality assurance. Trained pharmaceutical scientists and GMP specialists perform assessments, address weaknesses that may be identified, and provide tools and training to improve drug quality control in public and private sectors for drug quality labs, procurement organizations, manufacturers, and distributors.
- ◆ **Developing and Disseminating Evidence-based Drug and Therapeutic Information:** Drawing upon the expertise of its scientific volunteers, USP develops targeted drug and therapeutic information materials for health care providers based on specific need. In addition, USP offers assistance in establishing and equipping local drug information centers, offering workshops in pharmacovigilance activities, and by working with local academic, government, nongovernmental, and professional institutions.
- ◆ **Providing Continuing Education:** USP provides training for physicians, pharmacists, and nurses in drug information and pharmacotherapy to help improve drug dispensing to ensure competence and accountability.
- ◆ **Furnishing Technical Leadership Toward Regional and International Cooperation:** USP has a long tradition of convening and facilitating policy discussion through the organization's system of open conferences, Internet-based communications, and regular publications.

The driving force behind USP DQI is a dedicated group of USP professionals who have developed this rigorous scientific program. The USP DQI staff who implement the program activities comprise internationally trained doctors, scientists, chemists, drug and medical information specialists, and GMP experts with access to state-of-the-art laboratory technology and over 650 USP volunteer experts. The USP DQI staff works closely with USP's Council of Experts, in particular with the committees on Infectious Diseases and International Health.

**Drug quality is a global concern** — access to good-quality, essential medicines is a necessity for every country in order to protect the health of its people. USP DQI advances strategies to improve drug quality and the appropriate use of drugs through collaborative efforts with individual governments, national and regional partnerships, international health organizations, technical partners, and external donors. USP DQI commits its efforts to facilitating and strengthening those systems to improve global public health.