



MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND CHILD CARE

SUMMARY OF THE IMPACT OF THE ERA-ZIMBABWE (ERAZ) PLATFORM

Since the establishment of the ERA platform in Zimbabwe it has had an impact on how evidence is used to inform policy and decision-making within the Ministry and at a national level. The ERAZ evidence products have influenced the development of guidelines, policies and discourse at national level. For example, the National Health Insurance (NHI) rapid review has facilitated evidence-informed discourse at Cabinet level, and the evidence is influencing the country's National Development Strategy (2021-2025), which includes the implementation of the NHI roadmap as one of the strategies, expected to culminate into an all-inclusive National Health Insurance for Zimbabwe. The COVID-19 pandemic increased the need for evidence based policies and decisions. The ERAZ platform is experiencing an increased demand for rapid evidence from high-level policy makers. A rapid review product was developed around the area of COVID-19 institutional quarantine for returning citizens, The evidence influenced the development of the country's policy as well as the national Guidelines COVID-19 related institutional quarantine. Currently, work is underway to conduct another review in response to a request for updated evidence on the recommendation duration of COVID-19 quarantine period.

The findings from the rapid review on the use of face masks by general public in the COVID-19 Response was adopted by the National COVID-19 response team and the Cabinet proclaimed a policy on the mandatory wearing of face masks for all citizens when in public. On request, he ERAZ platform assisted in the development of the national guidelines on use of face masks, and

on institutional and home quarantine for COVID-19. Overall there is a general sense of satisfaction with the national response to COVID-19, including the policies and decisions made based on evidence synthesis from the ERAZ platform.

The team believes that in the long term the use of evidence based decisions in the health sector will result in policies that will ensure an effective and efficient health system in the country.

In short, the ERAZ platform has over the last 18 months created an unprecedented awareness of the importance of use of research evidence in health systems policy and decision-making. Through constant engagement and interaction of the platform members, (some of who are policy makers themselves) with the policy makers, this created a comfortable hand-holding opportunity of capacitating the policy makers to demand and use research evidence in policy and decision-making. The Alliance funding played a pivotal role in the establishment and embedding of the ERAZ platform right within the Ministry of Health, among the demanders and users of the research evidence provided by the platform, thus institutionalizing production and uptake of research evidence in policy and decision-making. This has not escaped the eyes and ears of policy makers in higher offices, resulting in a recent request from the Office of the President and Cabinet for evidence to guide revision of the national policy on COVID-19 related quarantine.

With the impact and benefits so clearly demonstrated, it should not be a problem to, in the second half of the year, advocate for the inclusion of the ERAZ platform and sustainability in the 2021-2025 strategic plan of the Zimbabwe Ministry of Health and Child Care, thus ensuring financial and other forms of sustainability.