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# YOUTH FRIENDLY PHARMACIES AND PARTNERSHIPS: THE CMS-CELSAM EXPERIENCE

*Executive Summary*

December 2005

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**PSP-One**

PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS FOR BETTER HEALTH

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Commercial Market Strategies project (CMS) developed a network of youth-friendly pharmacies to provide reproductive health information and contraceptives to youth in Guanajuato, Mexico. The network involved the commercial sector in providing reproductive health and family planning services, as well respect youth's privacy and reduce their potential embarrassment when obtaining those services. The project was launched as a pilot in November 2002 in collaboration with the Centro Latinoamericano para Salud y Mujer (CELSAM).

Two principal strategies guided the network's design and implementation: training of pharmacy staff and clerks to better serve youths' needs and the launching of a communications campaign to promote the network and provide reproductive health information. This report documents the staged process in which the network was developed, discusses its impact and replication, and highlights lessons learned from the experience.

An assessment of the network indicated that it improved the quality of reproductive health services available to youth in participating retail pharmacies. The trained pharmacy staff demonstrated more knowledge about contraceptives and sexually transmitted infections and treated youth in a friendly and non-judgmental manner, as compared to a group of pharmacies not in the network. These results on the supply side, including successful institutional partnerships with the public and private sectors, supported its replication in other cities in Mexico.

CMS learned valuable lessons designing, developing, and implementing the youth-friendly pharmacy model. The most critical lessons that contributed to the project's success were:

- selecting a private-sector partner that was committed to the long-term sustainability of the project
- establishing an advisory board of private- and public-sector institutions to support and lend credibility to the project
- including a behavior-change communications strategy over a longer timeframe
- assessing the effectiveness of the project and documenting results to inform scale-up and replication

Based on the success and lessons learned from the model in Mexico, the follow-on project to CMS, PSP-One, will conduct a feasibility study to determine whether the model can be replicated in sub-Saharan Africa.