Dear friends,

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the Zinc ORS News – a quarterly update to stakeholders on ‘Reducing deaths from Diarrhoea’ programme through ORS and Zinc therapy in Bihar. As you may be aware, the Micronutrient Initiative (MI) is supporting the Department of Health & Family Welfare in Bihar to scale up the use of ORS and Zinc for treatment of childhood diarrhoea – one of the key causes of child deaths – through the public health system.

The programme seeks to build the capacity of frontline health workers including the ANM and ASHA as well as the Anganwadi workers to treat child diarrhoea cases. With the provision of adequate communications and supplies, supported by a strong monitoring system, it is expected to create a successful model that could be expanded across the state.

MI thanks the Department of Health & Family Welfare and the Department of Women & Child Development, Government of Bihar for their support in rolling out this important intervention in the quickest possible manner. We will endeavour to bring you regular updates on the programme through this newsletter and seek feedback to improve this programme further.

Best regards,

Mathew Joseph
Director, India
Micronutrient Initiative

The State Health Society, Bihar considers the prevention and management of diarrhoeal diseases as central to improving child survival and is committed to support all programmatic interventions in reducing under five mortality rate. To reduce the burden of diarrhoea on child health and increase child survival, Micronutrient Initiative (MI) is providing technical and programmatic support to State Health Society, Bihar for implementing Childhood Diarrhoea Management programme in 15 districts of Bihar. The purpose of the three-year programme is to facilitate mainstreaming and scale-up of therapeutic zinc supplementation and Oral Rehydration Salt (ORS) for treatment of childhood diarrhoea through public health system, while increasing the proportion of caregivers who seek rational treatment for diarrhoea.

Micronutrient Initiative (MI) has successfully conducted trainings of government health functionaries in the districts of Banka, Bhagalpur, Sheohar, Samastipur and Sitamarhi and also supplied combi-packs for diarrhoea treatment. Such interventions will build the capacity of public health personnel and strengthen the management of diarrhoeal diseases at grassroots level. I congratulate entire team of Micronutrient Initiative working in the state for the activities implemented till date and wish them success ahead.

Sanjay Kumar, IAS
Secretary, Health
cum
Executive Director
State Health Society
ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

Micronutrient Initiative (MI) has been actively working towards promoting better health amongst children and thereby improving their quality of life. "Reducing deaths from Diarrhoea" programme is one such initiative undertaken by MI in collaboration with Government of Bihar which aims to reduce child mortality caused due to diarrhoea. The deaths caused due to diarrhoea in children could be very easily prevented with proper education, training and easy accessibility of treatment facilities. With this mission, MI is implementing the demonstration phase of the programme in fifteen districts of Bihar, viz., Banka, Bhagalpur, East Champaran, Gaya, Jehanabad, Khagaria, Madhepura, Munger, Saharsa, Nalanda, Samastipur, Sheikhpura, Sheohar, Sitamarhi and Supaul. The programme is supported by The Children’s Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF).

THE KEY OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME ARE:

• To build capacities of public sector health-care providers on revised diarrhoea management
• To ensure timely and easy accessibility of diarrhoea treatment combi-packs consisting of Zinc and ORS, at the point of care
• To ensure that there is adequate awareness among the caregivers with respect to Zinc and ORS administration

TRAINING OF HEALTH AND ICDS FUNCTIONARIES

With the support of State Health Society, MI launched cadre-wise training programme for the government health and ICDS functionaries. MI hired a professional training agency to conduct training programmes in the five districts of Banka, Bhagalpur, Sheohar, Samastipur and Sitamarhi over a period of two-and-half months starting from mid-May till the end of July. The training module consisted of revised diarrhoea management protocol, use of inter-personal communication tools and reporting of cases of childhood diarrhoea. The training programmes were conducted at three levels:

• Medical Officers and Child Development Project Officers were trained at districts
• ANMs, LHV's (Lady Health Visitors), Pharmacists, Block Health Managers, Block Community Mobilisers and Staff Nurses were trained at blocks
• ASHAs and AWWs (Aanganwadi Worker) were trained together

Washing hands with soap can reduce the risk of diarrhoeal diseases by 42—47%

Training Programme at Samastipur

Programme Districts in Bihar

Shri Ashwini Kumar Choubey
Honourable Health Minister, Bihar at Sultanganj block in Bhagalpur addressing health workers during training on diarrhoea management
As shown in the graph, cadre-wise attendance ranged between 85-90% against the planned training load. More than 21,000 personnel were trained in the aforesaid five districts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Cadre-wise Existing Number</th>
<th>Cadre-wise Trained</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L1</td>
<td>705</td>
<td>586</td>
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<tr>
<td>L2</td>
<td>2719</td>
<td>2502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L3</td>
<td>20258</td>
<td>18108</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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**PROGRESS UPDATE**

**DIARRHOEA TREATMENT COMBI-PACK**

In an endeavour to effectively treat childhood diarrhoea, Micronutrient Initiative (MI) has procured seed supply of ORS and Zinc formulation as per the standards recommended by WHO and GOI.

MI has designed a compact treatment unit, **combi-pack**, with two sachets of ORS and 14 tablets of Zinc. A pictorial leaflet illustrating preparation of ORS and Zinc solution along with a 'measure' is also included in each combi-pack.

MI has distributed nearly nine lakh combi-packs in five districts of Banka, Bhagalpur, Samastipur, Sheohar and Sitamarhi till date. MI's efforts of distribution of combi-packs in public has been substantiated by concerned district health functionaries and have made availability of combi-packs to Primary Health Centres (PHC), Health Sub-centres (HSC) and to frontline health functionaries including ASHA and Aanganwadi workers (AWW). This distribution of combi-packs by MI is in addition to the supply made by the state government through ASHA drug kits.

An ASHA administering Zinc solution to a child suffering from diarrhoea in Paswan tola village, Ujjyarpur block of Samastipur district
PROGRAMME CHAMPION

Babita Devi joined as an ASHA in the year 2007 and is currently working as ASHA Facilitator in Tariyani block in Sheohar district. Under the CIFF supported programme in Bihar, Babita has been trained on diarrhoea management. In the past two months she has distributed more than 30 combi-packs among caregivers to treat children with diarrhoea. Like her, hundreds of ASHAs working in other programme districts are also extending the delivery of combi-packs among caregivers in the far-flung villages.

ORS WEEK, 2011

Since 2001, July 29 is observed as National ORS Day and the week ensuing ORS Day is celebrated as ORS Week. The theme for ORS week this year was ‘ORS aur Zinc ka Saath, De Dast ko Maat’ (i.e. Combination of ORS and Zinc will rout Diarrhoea). In sync with the theme, State Health Society, Bihar released press advertorials highlighting the importance of Zinc in diarrhoea management. The programme districts utilised this opportunity and organised rallies to mobilise the community as well as boost the enthusiasm of health service providers.

Rallies and Press coverage in programme districts

For further information/queries and contributions on programme please contact:

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