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Primary Health Care Reform: Responding to Emerging Urban Health Challenges by addressing equity through a New Primary Health Care (PHC) Model

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With the aim of solving the complicated urban health problems a new primary health care model is designed and tested in Ethiopia. The model is developed based on lessons from successful countries; particularly Cuba and Brazil. The key components of the new PHC model are: categorizing communities based on risk assessment; and introducing team-based approach to provide targeted services to identified priority population groups. A team of health professionals, also called a “family health team” were tasked to provide targeted services to priority populations through home visit or outreach sites. A study was conducted to assess the effect of the new model through key informant interviews, in-depth interviews, and desk reviews. The model helped to enhance access to services to the needy segment of the urban population. It has a well-developed approach to measuring and tackling inequities in health including a focus on disadvantaged population groups or social classes; narrowing the health gap and reducing inequities. The model targeted priority population groups based on epidemiological and economic assessment; due to this pregnant women, homeless people and school children benefited from the services provided through the new approach. The new PHC model is a promising approach to address current and future urban health challenges. With follow-up, support and further evidence based refinement the model could potentially benefit millions.