

DKT International Mitigates Covid-19 Impact on Global Family Planning in 2021

WASHINGTON--([BUSINESS WIRE](#))--While the pandemic continues to put immense pressure on access to family planning, [DKT International](#), one of the largest providers of family planning products and services in the developing world, discusses top concerns to keep in mind in 2021. DKT continues to shift to meet the contraceptive and safe abortion needs of individuals around the world and shares critical insights on how organizations can reduce the impact and prepare for another year of Covid-19.

“Although the Covid-19 vaccine distribution has begun in many countries, the pandemic will not stop overnight and health and government officials will continue working to stop the spread of the virus across the globe,” says Chris Purdy, CEO of DKT International. “As such, there is no doubt that 2021 will be another challenging year and access to quality contraception and safe abortion methods and technologies will become more essential than ever.”

Protecting the sexual and reproductive destinies of all people has remained top priority within the many countries DKT operates. As Covid-19 continues, DKT’s efforts decrease the pressure on healthcare systems and providers by advancing telemedicine capabilities and through building out digital and e-commerce platforms for contraceptive access.

According to DKT, family planning organizations must remain steadfast and continue preparing for issues experienced in the last year, including: stock outs, lack of healthcare providers, limited clinic access, and more. In preparation for another year of Covid-19, DKT informs on the following:

- **Already damaged supply chains will likely be exacerbated by dwindling economies:** The global contraceptive supply chain was severely damaged by Covid-19 in 2020. With worsened global economies and continued lockdowns in many parts of the world, it will be challenging to ensure a healthy supply chain for family planning products. In preparation, DKT programs are stockpiling inventory from anywhere from a year to two years.
- **Continued lockdown resulting in decreased access to clinic procedures and contraception options:** As people will be avoiding in office visits and procedures, DKT predicts the use of short-term methods such as condoms and emergency contraceptives will continue to increase. Overall, many family planning providers will likely experience consumers switching contraception methods, resulting in a higher rate of contraceptive drop-outs and more unwanted pregnancies. In order to ensure access, DKT will meet individuals where they are, emphasizing telemedicine, home deliveries, free consultation services, and education about contraception methods.
- **In country, sales representatives may struggle to meet with pharmacy/clinics/etc. in different regions:** Due to quarantines and social distancing measures, many sales representatives are unable to physically go to remote regions to educate healthcare providers and product distributors about services and products. Consequently, DKT encourages extra sales team support such as offering flexible payment terms, performance incentives, both traditional and online marketing support, and increased inventory levels to prevent supply chain disruptions.
- **The health and safety of staff, patients, and customers will remain a topline concern:** DKT will continue to distribute masks, gel sanitizers, and PPE not just to their in-country staff, but also to their partner clinics and distributors. Additionally, via social marketing techniques, DKT is finding creative ways of reminding the public about social distancing and sanitizing. Some country programs, such as [DKT DR Congo](#) will encourage referral of telemedicine to reduce the time spent in clinics and potential exposure.
- **Organizations may have to focus on remote education for healthcare providers:** To mitigate this challenge, many DKT programs provide online training to healthcare providers on MVA (a safe abortion product used to manage miscarriages and provide abortion care), IUD insertion, and proper dosage and use of medical abortion. For example, DKT India is educating thousands of doctors and pharmacists

about abortion pills through the innovative online platform, [DoctorStore](#), while in Indonesia, DKT provides webinar Zoom courses to educate midwives and nurses.

“While Covid-19 has impacted our activities and made our operations more difficult and costly to run, access to family planning should remain a top priority worldwide. Each year, millions of people are diagnosed with or die from HIV and unsafe abortions and the reproductive health needs of women and men around the world are not on ‘pause’ during this time,” adds Purdy. “DKT will prepare thoroughly, remain steadfast in its mission, and forge ahead despite the many continued adversities we are facing.”

Since 1989, DKT International’s [core mission](#) has been to provide safe and affordable options for family planning and HIV prevention through social marketing in 90 underserved countries throughout Latin America, Africa, and Asia. In 2019, DKT generated 48 million CYPs through the sale of more than 805 million condoms, 93 million cycles of oral contraceptives, 13 million emergency contraceptives, 30 million injectables, 1.8 million implants, 4 million IUDs, 4 million medical abortion (MA) combipacks, and 222,000 MVA kits.