



LIFE-SAVING DRUG BRINGS HOPE TO DELIVERY ROOMS IN MAKUENI COUNTY: THE STORY OF FAITH MUMBE.

County:	Makueni		
Sector/s:	Health	Sub-sector/Theme:	Maternal and Reproductive Health (MTHRH)
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Target Audience:	County Departments of health, Development partners		
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Introduction

Maternal mortality remains a major global health concern, with postpartum hemorrhage (PPH) identified as one of the leading causes of death among mothers during or after childbirth. In Makueni County, like many other regions, maternal health outcomes have historically been affected by delayed response, inadequate treatment options, and the limitations of temperature-sensitive drugs such as oxytocin.

To address this challenge, the County Government of Makueni, through the Department of Health Services, partnered with Jhpiego, in collaboration with the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO) and the Kenya Obstetric and Gynecological Society, to introduce **Heat Stable Carbetocin (HSC)** in January 2024. HSC is a World Health Organization (WHO) recommended uterotonic drug for the prevention and treatment of postpartum hemorrhage. The drug does not require refrigeration and effectively controls bleeding after childbirth by stimulating uterine contractions.

The initiative aimed at improving maternal survival rates by enhancing PPH prevention and treatment in health facilities across the Makueni County. Through the systematic, County-wide adoption and integration of Heat Stable Carbetocin into routine emergency obstetric care, Makueni County



Government has eradicated postpartum hemorrhage-related maternal deaths, strengthening maternal health systems and restoring hope for countless mothers.

One such mother is Faith Mumbe, a 28-year-old expectant mother from Mbiuni, Machakos County.

Implementation of the practice

On Saturday, 21st September 2024, *Faith Mumbe*, a 28-year-old expectant mother from Mbiuni, Machakos County, unexpectedly went into early labor while attending a friend's funeral in Muvau village, Makueni County. As she was being prepared for a cesarean section at the Mother and Child Hospital in Wote, Faith began to bleed heavily — a classic case of postpartum hemorrhage (PPH).

"I remember holding my 2.7-kilogram baby girl before everything went dark," Faith recalls. She had lost consciousness due to severe blood loss.



Picture 1: the Heat Stable Carbetocin (HSC) being used to improve maternal survival rates by enhancing PPH prevention and treatment in health facilities across the Makueni County

Previously, the hospital relied on oxytocin, a drug that requires refrigeration to remain effective. With frequent power interruptions and logistical challenges, oxytocin's efficacy could not always be guaranteed, putting mothers at heightened risk.

Faith's life was saved within 15 minutes after healthcare providers administered **Heat Stable Carbetocin (HSC)**, quickly controlling the severe postpartum hemorrhage and preventing further complications.

The County-wide adoption of the drug in Makueni was made possible through a strategic partnership with Jhpiego, which supplied the drug to 36 health facilities including the Mother and Child Hospital, Wote, and other high-volume centers. Through the partnership, healthcare workers were also equipped with calibrated blood collection drapes to accurately measure blood loss — replacing the unreliable visual estimation method previously used. The drug has earned the affectionate nickname "Kausha", meaning "dry up" in Swahili, reflecting its efficacy in controlling excessive bleeding and saving lives.



Results of the practice

- Zero maternal deaths related to PPH have been recorded in Makueni County since the introduction of Heat Stable Carbetocin in January 2024.
- Maternal deaths at the Mother and Child Hospital dropped from eight cases in 2022 to two cases in 2023, and zero in 2024.
- 456 healthcare providers have been trained on PPH prevention and treatment.
- Over 13,000 community members have been reached through maternal health awareness programs.
- In the FY 2024/2025, the Makueni County Government department of health services procured 11,000 calibrated blood collection drapes to strengthen emergency obstetric care.

Source of data: Makueni County Government directorate of health services 2025.

Impact

The introduction of Heat Stable Carbetocin has transformed maternal health care delivery in Makueni County:

- **Enhanced survival outcomes:** Mothers like Faith are now surviving complications that were once fatal.
- **Improved health system readiness:** The drug's heat stability ensures reliable access even in remote facilities without refrigeration.
- **Capacity building:** Continuous training and mentorship have strengthened healthcare providers' confidence and competence in handling PPH cases.
- **Community trust:** Increased awareness has encouraged more mothers to deliver in health facilities, reducing home deliveries and preventable deaths.



Picture 2: Faith Mumbe with her baby

“If Faith hadn’t been rushed to the facility in time, she could have lost her uterus or even her life,”—Christine Muteria, Nursing Services Coordinator, Mother and Child Hospital

“We are transitioning fully to this new drug and will continue procurement beyond 2026 to ensure that Makueni remains a leader in maternal health,”
— Dr. Harvey Mulei, Chief Officer for Health Services.



“You cannot imagine experiencing PPH far from a hospital. Every woman deserves a safe delivery,”
— H.E. Lucy Mulili, Deputy Governor, Makueni County.

Makueni’s approach has drawn both national and global attention, including being showcased at international forums. The initiative earned the Makueni County international recognition when the Governor presented it at the World Congress of Gynecology and Obstetrics (2025) in Cape Town , South Africa, positioning Makueni as a model for other Counties and Countries seeking to reduce deaths from postpartum haemorrhage (PPH).

Lessons learnt:

- **Appropriate technologies should be used to improve maternal outcomes:** The use of context appropriate WHO-recommended uterotronics such as Heat Stable Carbetocin drastically reduce maternal mortality.
- **System- wide adoption is more impactful than isolated use across multiple facilities:** This enhances consistency of care and leads to measurable reductions in maternal mortality.
- **Partnerships amplify impact:** Collaboration with development partners such as Jhpiego and FIGO accelerates implementation and capacity building.
- **Accurate measurement is key:** Use of calibrated blood drapes has enhanced clinical decision-making and improved maternal outcomes.
- **Community sensitization matters:** Educating women on the importance of skilled birth attendance increases facility-based deliveries.
- **Sustainability planning is essential:** The County’s commitment to procure the drug beyond donor support ensures long-term impact.

Recommendations & Conclusion

Faith Mumbe’s survival is not just a personal victory — it represents the transformative power of innovation, strategic partnership, and strong leadership in maternal health. Through the adoption of Heat Stable Carbetocin, Makueni County department of health services has set a new standard for maternal care — ensuring that no mother dies while giving life.

Quick facts

Maternal deaths from PPH since 2024

- 36 facilities supplied with Heat Stable Carbetocin
- 456 health workers trained
- 13,000+ community members sensitized
- 11,000 calibrated drapes procured in FY 2024/25

Further Reading



1. <https://makueni.go.ke/2025/departments/health/makuenis-fight-against-maternal-deaths-earns-global-recognition/>

Pictorial



Picture 3: A healthcare worker evacuates a patient from an ambulance into the Mother and Child Hospital in Wote.