North Star Alliance leverages AIMMS to combat HIV/AIDS in Africa

About North Star Alliance

North Star Alliance brings health to hard-to-reach people across Africa in a “Blue Box.” The organization uses converted shipping containers (painted blue) to house clinics that deliver public health programs for people with increased health risks, such as truck drivers, and primary health care to communities with limited or no access to medical services.
Challenge

More than 35 million people worldwide are infected with HIV or are living with AIDS, and approximately 70% live in Sub-Saharan Africa. Mobile populations, such as long distance truck drivers, are particularly at risk of contracting and transmitting the virus. In 2007, TNT Express and the United Nations World Food Programme joined forces to form North Star Alliance (North Star), their goal being to increase access to health services along major transport corridors in the region. With a growing network of clinics and an expanding amount of patients, North Star was looking for a way to obtain the optimal location for current and future clinics as well as the number of employees required at each site.

Solution

ORTEC, a longstanding AIMMS partner and North Star supporter, developed POLARIS, an innovative application built on the AIMMS optimization platform that helps the organization pinpoint the optimal location for its clinics and optimize planning on the ground. The program pulls data from a number of sources including traffic flows, border wait times, and COMETS (Corridor Medical Transfer System) data, to balance two key objectives:

1. Each clinic must be placed in a location where the maximum number of truck drivers can access it.
2. These clinics must form part of a larger continuum of care, so drivers moving along the corridor can reasonably access additional clinics for ongoing treatment and medication refills along their route.

"The delivery of this new system, named POLARIS (Program for Optimizing the Long-term Achievements of the Roadside Wellness Centres Investment Strategy), enables us to select optimal Wellness Centre locations, taking into account important factors such as continuity of care and number of visitors" — Luke Disney, Executive Director of North Star Alliance.

Results:

POLARIS has enabled North Star to determine the optimal locations for its clinics without the need to invest a great deal of time and expense for research and data analysis. The organization’s network now reaches over 280,000 people in 13 countries every year.

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About AIMMS

The AIMMS Prescriptive Analytics Platform helps you evaluate and identify the best options to tackle your most pressing challenges with sophisticated analytics that leverage mathematical modeling and scenarios while pulling from multiple data sources. You can immediately gauge, not just what is likely to happen, but what you should do about it for the best possible outcome. Whether you seek to improve your strategy, planning, operations or transform your entire supply chain, AIMMS software is the ideal combination of being tailored to your unique situation paired with speed to value (ROI). That’s why teams at Shell, Johnson & Johnson, GE and Heineken and many more fire up AIMMS every day.

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