

Novartis Social Business



Novartis Access is a social business program that brings affordable treatments to patients

suffering from chronic diseases in low- and lower-middle-income countries (LMICs).

Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), also known as chronic diseases, are growing in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) but often patients in these countries are not receiving the medicine and care they need.

Annually, 28 million people die from cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, respiratory diseases and cancers in these countries, representing nearly 75% of deaths from NCDs globally¹.

Together, these four groups of diseases account for 82% of all NCD deaths: cardiovascular diseases account for most NCD deaths, or 17.5 million people annually, followed by cancers (8.2 million), respiratory diseases (4 million), and diabetes (1.5 million).

When it comes to chronic diseases, donations are important but not scalable enough to make a lasting impact. That's why we need new ways to ensure access to treatments for NCDs.

Program overview

Novartis Access is an innovative portfolio of 15 on- and-off patent medicines, aiming to drive a step change in access to medicines in LMICs. The portfolio is offered as a basket at a price of USD 1 per treatment per month to governments, NGOs and other institutional customers.

The Novartis Access portfolio² includes medicines from Novartis Pharmaceuticals and Sandoz selected based on three criteria: significant health needs, medical relevance, and lack of local access programs. It aims to offer various treatment options, including well-proven and standard first-line treatments as well as some of the latest treatment choices. Thirteen out of the 15 portfolio medicines are either on or belong to the World Health Organization's Model List of Essential Medicines³.

Novartis has identified 30 countries from the list of 107 countries in the scope of the Access to Medicine Index that lack access to medicine programs and suffer from a disproportionately high NCD burden.

Partnerships are key to the success of the program. We aim to work with governments and NGOs to distribute our medicines on the ground and to raise awareness and strengthen healthcare system capabilities in key NCDs, including training on diagnosis and treatment.

We are also working with our partners to minimize price mark-ups for patients on Novartis Access medicines; in Kenya for instance, we expect the end price for patients to be approximately USD 1.50 per treatment per month.

We look to governments to assess whether Novartis Access meets their healthcare needs and can be implemented in compliance with their national policies.

Novartis Access is a social business program, which we expect will eventually create value for society, as well as our company.

It is a natural extension of two important contributions we make to society: developing breakthrough medicines that help people fight disease and working to deliver them to as many people as possible.

We aim to make Novartis Access a sustainable business over time by establishing a program of sufficient scale to make a lasting impact for patients. As the program is unprecedented in terms of scope and approach, we will have to learn and adjust as it is rolled out on the ground.

One year into the program

Novartis Access started in September 2015. In one year, the program launched in Kenya, memoranda of understanding were signed with Ethiopia and Rwanda, and a pilot will soon start in Vietnam. Rollout is progressing well in Kenya with the fourth delivery on its way.

In addition, advanced discussions are taking place to introduce the program in more than 10 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, Central America and Central Eastern Europe.

We are collaborating with the International Committee of the Red Cross to provide treatments for refugee populations in Lebanon.

Learnings from this first year will be essential to guide our expansion to additional countries – depending on government and stakeholder demand. We hope to implement Novartis Access in 30 countries in the coming years and to reach 20 million patients by 2020.

Boston University has developed a methodology to evaluate Novartis Access in Kenya that could lead to an industry benchmark. Results will be published starting in 2017.

References

¹ WHO Noncommunicable diseases fact sheet: <http://www.who.int/mediacentrefactsheets/fs355/en>

² Novartis Access portfolio includes Novartis Pharmaceuticals products valsartan (hypertension), vildagliptin (diabetes) and letrozole (breast cancer), as well as high-quality generic medicines from Sandoz to treat heart failure and hypertension (amlodipine, bisoprolol, HCTZ, furosemide, ramipril), dyslipidemia (simvastatin), diabetes (glimperide, metformin), breast cancer (anastrozole, tamoxifen), asthma and COPD (salbutamol). We have also included one Sandoz treatment against childhood pneumonia (amoxicillin 250mg dispersible tablets).

³ WHO Model List of Essential Medicines: <http://www.who.int/medicines/publications/essentialmedicines/en>