

MEDIA RELEASE • COMMUNIQUE AUX MEDIAS • MEDIENMITTEILUNG

Punjab province in Pakistan signs agreement with Novartis Access against chronic diseases

- *Poor patients in Punjab will have access to high-quality medicines against noncommunicable, chronic diseases thanks to agreement between government and Novartis Access*
- *Punjab government will make medicines available free of charge through public sector hospitals from early 2018 onward*
- *Pakistan is among the countries most affected by chronic diseases; more than half of its population lives in the Punjab province*

Basel, 11 November 2017 – Today, the provincial government of Punjab in Pakistan signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Novartis to roll out Novartis Access. Poor patients in the province of Punjab will soon have free access to high-quality medicines from the Novartis Access portfolio targeting four key noncommunicable disease areas (NCDs): cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, respiratory illnesses, and breast cancer. The agreement also includes the implementation of innovative software to track and monitor individual patient access and adherence.

“We are very mindful of the warnings from the World Health Organization and World Bank that Pakistan’s chronic disease problem urgently needs to be addressed with high-quality treatment and care.” said Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Chief Minister Punjab. “We are pleased that public-private partnerships like the one with Novartis Access can measurably improve healthcare services and capabilities in the province,” he added.

Punjab province, with a population of 110 million, is the largest province in Pakistan, representing more than half of the country’s population. The agreement with Novartis Access is part of an ongoing program to transform the treatment of NCDs and other diseases in Punjab. Special focus will be on providing quality care in the areas of preventive care, primary and secondary healthcare, drug control and institutional reforms. Novartis Access treatments are among the world’s most frequently prescribed medicines for chronic diseases.

“Novartis Access has been designed to help governments in lower-income countries improve access to treatments for noncommunicable diseases for the poorest populations. Our key goal is to help patients in Punjab better manage their chronic condition with this program. We believe new approaches that bring governments and the private sector together are needed to expand access to medicines and healthcare delivery,” said Dr. Harald Nusser, Head of Novartis Social Business.

The program in Punjab will also involve the deployment of an offspring of the Novartis SMS for Life digital platform, which will use biometric data to create a registry able to help track patient access and adherence. The anonymized data generated by the system will inform both the government and Novartis about disease prevalence, treatment availability and patient outreach, allowing to better serve patients.

In May 2017, Novartis also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Pakistan's Ministry of National Health Services to make Novartis Access treatments available through the Prime Minister's National Health Insurance Program. This program aims to serve the poorest patients in the country through federal facilities and nearly 1 million families are currently enrolled. Novartis is working with other provincial governments in Pakistan to further expand Novartis Access.

NCDs are on the rise in Pakistan. According to the World Bank¹, chronic diseases account for 59% of the total disease burden in Pakistan¹ and half of all deaths every year in the country². The World Health Organization states there is a 21% probability of dying between the ages of 30 and 70 years from the four main NCDs², a pattern reflected in the Punjab province. Approximately a tenth of the population is diabetic³; 38% is overweight or obese, over half are hypertensive, and over a third smoke tobacco⁴, placing many at higher risk of heart disease and respiratory problems.

The Punjab government is tackling the growing burden of NCDs, particularly through the Punjab Health Sector Plan. Novartis Pharma Pakistan and the Punjab health department recently signed another major health initiative to provide treatment for cancer patients in the province.

Pakistan is the first country in Asia to launch Novartis Access and first deliveries of medicines to the Punjab are planned in early 2018. Novartis Access was first introduced in 2016 through faith-based organizations in Kenya and is underway through national systems or faith-based health systems in Cameroon and Rwanda. Other countries, including Ethiopia and Uganda, are at earlier stages of introducing the program.

About Novartis Access

Novartis Access includes 15 generic and patented medicines to address cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, respiratory illnesses, and breast cancer. The portfolio is available to governments, NGOs and other public-sector healthcare providers in low and lower middle income countries for USD 1 per treatment, per month*. They have been selected based on medical relevance: they are either on or pertain to a class outlined in the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines, or belong to the most frequently prescribed medicines in these disease areas. Novartis Access launched in 2015 and we strive to reach 30 countries over the coming years based on government and stakeholder demand. Novartis Access is the latest addition to our company's efforts to enhance access to healthcare for patients at every level of income. It is integrated in Novartis Social Business, a unit which includes the Novartis Malaria Initiative and the Novartis Healthy Family programs. This unit is operationally managed by Sandoz, the Novartis generics and biosimilars division. For more information, please visit <http://socialbusiness.novartis.com>.

** The USD 1 price does not include costs for freight, insurance and potential taxes.*

About Novartis

Novartis provides innovative healthcare solutions that address the evolving needs of patients and societies. Headquartered in Basel, Switzerland, Novartis offers a diversified portfolio to best meet these needs: innovative medicines, cost-saving generic and biosimilar pharmaceuticals and eye care. Novartis has leading positions globally in each of these areas. In 2016, the Group achieved net sales of USD 48.5 billion, while R&D throughout the Group amounted to approximately USD 9.0 billion. Novartis Group companies employ approximately 121,000 full-time-equivalent associates. Novartis products are sold in approximately 155 countries around the world. For more information, please visit <http://www.novartis.com>.

Novartis is on Twitter. Sign up to follow @Novartis at <http://twitter.com/novartis>
For Novartis multimedia content, please visit www.novartis.com/news/media-library
For questions about the site or required registration, please contact media.relations@novartis.com

References

1. Engelgau MM, El-Saharty S, Kudesia P. Capitalizing on the Demographic Transition: Tackling Noncommunicable Diseases in South Asia. World Bank. Washington DC, 2010, p.50-51. Accessible at: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/869431468307160023/Capitalizing-on-the-demographic-transition-tackling-non-communicable-diseases-in-South-Asia>
2. World Health Organization, Pakistan NCD Factsheet. Accessible at: http://www.who.int/nmh/countries/pak_en.pdf
3. Shera, AS et al. "Pakistan National Diabetes Survey: Prevalence of glucose intolerance and associated factors in the Punjab province of Pakistan." Prim Care Diabetes. 2010 Jul;4(2):79-83
4. Khan MS, Khan A, Ali A, Akhtar N, Rasool F, Khan H, et al. Prevalence of risk factors for coronary artery disease in Southern Punjab, Pakistan. Trop J Pharm Res 2016; 15(1):195-200

#

Novartis Media Relations

Central media line: +41 61 324 2200

E-mail: media.relations@novartis.com

Antonio Ligi
Novartis Global Media Relations
+41 61 324 1374 (direct)
+41 79 723 3681 (mobile)
antonio.ligi@novartis.com

Nadine Schecker
Novartis Social Business
+41 61 696 8633 (direct)
+41 79 682 1326 (mobile)
nadine.schecker@novartis.com