

## Kenya needs to combat NCDs through public private partnerships

All stakeholders in the Kenyan healthcare sector must step up efforts and work together in ensuring the over 30% of the Kenyans living with at least one non-communicable disease (NCD) can access treatment and care medication.

If the country is to see a reduction in the number of deaths due to NCDs, which currently stands at 27%, private and public sector players will have to embrace partnerships to address the common risk factors.

And as Kenya's healthcare system struggles to cope with infectious diseases and provision of maternal health, the private sector will have to do more to extend diagnosis, treatment and care for NCDs to the poorest and most marginalised communities as this can't be left to the public sector alone.



Dr. Franklin Bett, public health manager - curative at the Kenya Red Cross Society noted that partnerships can help build the country's healthcare system capabilities on NCD including screening, diagnosis and treatment but they must be coupled with proper distribution of NCD medicines with strict the integrity of the supply chains.

The Kenya Red Cross has already partnered with global pharmaceutical Norvatis to provide NCD medicines to rural health facilities in three counties at an affordable rate of a \$1,5 a month across four disease areas; cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, respiratory diseases and breast cancer.

In addition, the programme is raising awareness of NCDs and screening with over 90,000 people screened since February 2016 with over 11,000 started on the 1 dollar a month treatment.

“The cost implication of treating NCDs in Kenya is largely prohibitive and for a long time, people have chosen to provide for their families’ needs instead of getting medication. Novartis is out to change this and we are confident that the Access partnership will enable more Kenyans living with an NCD access medication”, said Anthony Gitau, Novartis Access, country head, Kenya.

The programme is expected to be rolled out to all 47 counties by the end of 2017. To date, the country has ordered more than 100,000 monthly treatments for five Novartis Access medicines across the four disease areas

In Kenya, NCDs account for close to 50% of inpatient admissions and 40% of hospital deaths, dominating healthcare budgets and as such, the game plan needs to be inclusive partnerships of development in order to reach the SDGs of the 2030 agenda.

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