



PRESS RELEASE

Pharmaceutical industry issues call for collective action to address the rising global burden of chronic disease

- Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) including cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, lung disease, mental health, and neurological disorders are responsible for 75% of deaths worldwide.
- New research demonstrates that investing an additional 1% of GDP in public healthcare spending, where at least 40% is aimed at preventing and treating NCDs, could save close to 5 million lives each year in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).
- Ahead of the Fourth High-Level Meeting of the UN General Assembly on the prevention and control of NCDs and mental health this September, the global trade association representing the pharmaceutical industry urges collective action to reduce premature deaths from NCDs through existing cost-effective interventions.

11 MARCH 2025, GENEVA AND NEW YORK – Ahead of a [major UN milestone](#), the global pharmaceutical industry has issued a [“Call to Action”](#) urging collective action across the globe to tackle the rise of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, lung disease, mental health, and neurological disorders.

NCDs account for nearly [75%](#) of global deaths. More than [18 million](#) of the 43 million deaths that relate to NCDs are premature, with over [80%](#) of premature deaths taking place in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). About 33% of the global population is living with an NCD¹, up to [one in two](#) of us will get cancer in our lifetimes, and about [one billion](#) people are affected by a mental health condition.

In 2021, it was estimated that investment in NCD prevention and control would yield an annual seven-fold return in LMICs within a decade. This approach, which includes lifestyle interventions such as healthy diet and exercise as well as primary healthcare, could lead to an expected [USD 230 billion](#) economic gain by 2030.

[New research](#) carried out by Airfinity, which has been released as part of the Call to Action, and demonstrates that investing an additional 1% of GDP in public healthcare spending, where at least 40% is aimed at preventing and treating NCDs through primary health care, could save

¹ Estimate by IFPMA, based on global prevalence numbers and assumption of two NCDs on average per person living with an NCD

approximately 5 million lives each year in LMICs. This can be achieved through implementing [existing cost-effective interventions](#) such as cardiovascular disease management, diabetes screening, and respiratory care. The data supports growing consensus that more funding is needed to bend the curve on NCDs.

The new research has been released by IFPMA, the trade association representing the pharmaceutical industry to the United Nations, ahead of the High-Level Meeting of the UN General Assembly on the prevention and control of NCDs and mental health this September. The meeting is expected to result in a political declaration to drive action to reduce the global burden of these conditions worldwide.

Over 1,400 medicines have been approved for NCDs in the past 10 years², which have transformed how we fight disease, and are improving the lives of hundreds of millions of people living with chronic conditions. Today, there are a further 9,600 NCD medicines at various stages of research and development³.

Despite this progress, there are still significant barriers and delays in ensuring these medicines and vaccines can reach the people who need them, and there are still NCDs for which there is not adequate treatment. To improve end-to-end access for people living with NCDs, IFPMA calls for collective action to:

1. **Enable innovation:** Foster a healthy innovation ecosystem, supported by robust IP protection, and improve awareness and uptake of medical innovation to address the global NCD and mental health burden. This should include essential and innovative NCD medicines, vaccines, diagnostics, and medical devices, supported by appropriate health service delivery models.
2. **Mobilize investment:** Commit to invest more efficiently and effectively in strengthening health systems and to have concrete and actionable financing plans for NCDs and mental health so that we can more equitably reach individuals with integrated prevention, treatment, and care.
3. **Drive implementation:** Deliver effective programs and policies to ensure equitable access to NCD prevention, treatment, and care for all. Strengthen national health systems by integrating early screening, diagnosis, vaccination, comprehensive treatment options, and rehabilitation programs that effectively reach and address the needs of people living with NCDs and mental health conditions.

² Clarivate Cortellis platform accessed in January 2025

³ Clarivate Cortellis platform access in January 2025. "Drugs", as defined in the Cortellis Competitive Intelligence database, may include small molecules, biologics, drug combinations, biosimilars, salts, and new versions of existing drugs with an element of innovation, like a new formulation. Only the most advanced stage of development globally is reported for each drug (for instance, if a drug is being investigated in both Phase I and Phase III for different indications, it would only be reported once, as being in Phase III).

4. **Ensure accountability:** Implement measures to ensure accountability and high standards across all relevant sectors of government and key health stakeholders to accurately improve and report on delivery of NCDs and mental health prevention, treatment, and care. This includes a focus on monitoring the impact of vaccination, early screening, diagnosis, and treatment programs.

A political declaration that includes these recommendations can drive a vision for 2050 forward where there are fewer premature NCD deaths, reduced health systems strains, and healthier societies everywhere.

Dr David Reddy, Director General of IFPMA, said:

“While pharmaceutical innovation has led to incredible strides in how we prevent, treat, and cure diseases like cancer, cardiovascular disease, and mental health, too many people remain unable to get the healthcare they need.

“The upcoming UN High-Level Meeting provides a real opportunity to refocus attention on how cross sectoral partnerships can help increase access to cost-effective medicines and vaccines in a way that can transform – and even save - the lives of millions of people worldwide.”

Supporting the call for collective action, Dr Kimberly Green, Global Director for Primary Health Care at PATH (Secretariat for the Coalition for Access to NCD Medicines and Products), said:

“While investing in NCD prevention, diagnosis, and treatment represent public health ‘best buys’ and are considered cost-effective, improving accessibility of essential medicines and health products has been underrepresented in discussions ahead of the UN High-Level Meeting.

Global, multisectoral action is needed to turn the tide on NCDs and reduce catastrophic out-of-pocket health costs for people living with these conditions. Investing an additional 1% of GDP in health care, where at least 40% is directed towards preventing and treating NCDs through strengthened primary health care, could save five million lives each year in lower-and-middle-income countries—an important proof point in a growing body of evidence. The time to invest in NCDs through primary health care is now.”

Notes to Editor

According to the [2021 WHO Global Health Expenditure report](#), infectious and parasitic diseases account for the largest share of health spending (37%), followed by non-communicable diseases (26%).

About IFPMA

IFPMA represents the innovative pharmaceutical industry at the international level, engaging in official relations with the United Nations and multilateral organizations. Our vision is to ensure that scientific progress translates into the next generation of medicines and vaccines that deliver a healthier future for people everywhere. To achieve this, we act as a trusted partner, bringing our members' expertise to champion pharmaceutical innovation, drive policy that supports the research, development, and delivery of health technologies, and create sustainable solutions that advance global health.

For more information, visit ifpma.org.

For further information, please contact:

Elliot Dunster

Executive Director, Communications

+41 79 502 76 90

e.dunster@ifpma.org

Micaela Neumann

Manager, Communications

+41 79 774 23 99

m.neumann@ifpma.org