

New partnership to build stronger links with thyroid and less common diseases for a more inclusive NCD response

Language English



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NETWORK RELEASE

22 June 2021, Geneva (Switzerland). The NCD Alliance (NCDA) is proud to announce a new partnership with [Merck Healthcare KGaA \(Merck\)](#) [1] that will make the case for stronger links between the NCD and thyroid disease movements. Putting people first, the partnership will focus on multi-morbidity and advocate for a broad and inclusive NCD agenda to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) are the world's leading cause of death and disability. They are responsible for **41 million deaths every year**, hitting low- and middle-income countries the hardest. While NCD incidence keeps rising globally, unequal access to treatment continues to be a persistent challenge. In many cases, health systems remain ill-equipped to deal with the growing NCD prevalence, imposing hardship and financial burden for people and families affected by NCDs, as well as national economies.

Katie Dain, CEO of NCDA, said: "By partnering together, the NCD Alliance and Merck will seek to develop a **better understanding of the needs and priorities of people living with thyroid diseases** in low- and middle-income countries, to help shape effective policies, responsive health systems and access to quality care".

The global NCD response has focused primarily on four risk factors and four major diseases – cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes, and chronic respiratory diseases. Since 2018, mental health was also added as a core component, reflecting a shift by the World Health Organization (WHO) towards a more inclusive '5x5' approach.

While this was a welcome step forward, **more action is needed to integrate other NCDs – such as endocrinological conditions** – into policies and care packages to meet the needs of people and to better respond to multi-morbidity which is now becoming the norm rather than the exception. The partnership will support global advocacy efforts for the expansion of the 5x5 approach to include a broader set of diseases.

The Sustainable Development Goals and movement for Universal Health Coverage call for an integrative, multisectoral and inclusive approach that leaves no one behind. There is an opportunity to build on the current global

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Published on NCD Alliance (<https://old.ncdalliance.org>)

NCD agenda and commitments, giving attention to the web of conditions and diseases that are connected to the big five diseases and share common solutions.

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Further Information:

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About NCDA

The NCD Alliance (NCDA) is a unique civil society network, dedicated to improving NCD prevention and control worldwide. Today, our network includes NCDA members, national and regional NCD alliances, over 1,000 member associations of our founding federations, scientific and professional associations, and academic and research institutions. Together with strategic partners, including WHO, the UN and governments, NCDA is uniquely positioned to transform the global fight against NCDs through its core functions of global advocacy, accountability, capacity development and knowledge exchange.

Visit www.ncdalliance.org [3]

Post Date: Tuesday, 29 June, 2021

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[1] <https://www.merckgroup.com/en>

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