

New partnership to scale up action against NCDs in the workplace

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The NCD Alliance and the Novartis Foundation are proud to announce their new partnership to scale up action against NCDs in the workplace

Rapid urbanisation in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) has deepened health inequities and increased pressure on already under-resourced urban infrastructures and services. This is critical for healthcare systems, economies and communities in LMICs, which face a growing burden of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) such as cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes and respiratory disease, with almost 75% of the global NCD deaths occurring in LMICs.*

The global work force is predicted to rise to 3.5 billion by 2030. It is not only expanding in size, but is also becoming more organised around formal workplace settings. This makes workplaces an increasingly interesting platform to address the rising tide of NCDs. While there is mutual value for employers, governments and communities to support a healthy workforce, only 29% of organisations worldwide have implemented comprehensive health promotion and wellness strategies, and less than half of all businesses in LMICs offer health promotion programmes.**

Through their partnership, the NCD Alliance and the Novartis Foundation seek to contribute to the delivery of the global “25 by 25” NCD target by leveraging the workplace to address NCDs in LMICs.

The partnership seeks to promote the unique opportunity for NCD prevention and control in the workplace, and to provide good practice guidance based on the evaluation of progress and gaps. This will contribute to support *Better Hearts Better Cities*, an innovative multidisciplinary initiative launched by the Novartis Foundation and its partners to address high blood pressure (hypertension) and its underlying determining factors in low-income urban populations.

“We are proud to work with Novartis Foundation to make cities in LMICs healthier places”, said José Luis Castro, President, the NCD Alliance. *“Through workplace wellness initiatives, NCDs can be addressed in a structured environment – one in which working individuals spend close to half of their waking hours. Workplace wellness initiatives are a low-hanging fruit – an unmissable opportunity to make gains in NCD prevention and control. Through*

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a multisectoral approach across governments, private sector – including employers – and civil society, we can accelerate progress.”

Ann Aerts, Head of the Novartis Foundation, added, *“Today’s urban health challenges are complex, involving factors as broad as lifestyle choices, diet, transport, workplace practices and air pollution. These challenges are systemic and cannot be tackled by one organisation alone. We believe that by collaborating with local and global partners across a range of sectors, we can design and implement holistic solutions for healthier communities and cities. We are delighted to become a partner of the NCD Alliance and work with colleagues from other disciplines to support the achievement of the global NCD targets.”*

Through this partnership, the Novartis Foundation becomes a supporter of the NCD Alliance, joining other forward-thinking corporations and foundations.

About the Novartis Foundation

The Novartis Foundation is a philanthropic organisation which strives to have sustainable impact on the health of low-income communities through a combination of programmatic work, health outcomes research, and its translation into policy to tackle global health challenges. In 2016, the operational budget for the Foundation was CHF 15 million and our programs reached 8.9 million people.

About the NCD Alliance

The NCD Alliance is a unique civil society network, uniting 2,000 organisations in more than 170 countries, dedicated to improving NCD prevention and control worldwide. It was founded in 2009 by three global federations: the International Diabetes Federation (IDF), the World Heart Federation (WHF), and the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC).

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* World Health Organization, Global Status Report on Noncommunicable Diseases 2014. ** Buck Consultants. Working Well: A global survey of health promotion, workplace wellness, and productivity strategies, 2014.

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