

Novartis announces expansion of community health programmes to close gaps in heart disease and cancer care, targeting more than 30 countries by 2030

Novartis announced the expansion of its programmes to find and treat patients with heart disease and cancer in hard-to-reach communities around the world. This comes as public health efforts against chronic diseases slow or reverse in many countries. Three distinct Novartis community health approaches focused on closing gaps in care for low-income, rural and other communities will nearly triple from 11 to more than 30 countries by 2030, including:

- Inclusive Health Accelerators (IHAs): a new community-based initiative launching across five US cities this week, which aims to close gaps in access to breast and prostate cancer care communities through disease awareness, better access to screening and referrals for follow-up care
- Community Health Initiatives (CHIs): programmes to speed up diagnosis and treatment for heart disease and cancer in emerging economies will be expanded to at least 10 low- and middle-income countries
- CARDIO4Cities: an approach harnessing real-time data to help cities improve heart health and narrow health disparities, developed by the Novartis Foundation, an independent non-profit organization, plans to roll out across cities in 23 countries

“We are going further to bring heart disease and cancer care to communities falling through the gaps in health systems,” said Michelle Weese, chief corporate affairs officer at Novartis. “With progress slowing against chronic disease in many countries, and millions missing out on potential treatment, there is an urgent need for new, sustainable solutions to improve access to care.”

Each programme will involve Novartis teams working together with a distinct network of local groups – including community organizations, health authorities and private businesses – to increase access to prevention and early detection services, improve follow-up care, and speed up the referral process for specialist treatment.

In the US, Novartis is launching its community-driven IHA model designed to boost early detection of prostate and breast cancer and address gaps in care among under-reached populations. Beginning in five cities – New York, Los Angeles, Detroit, Houston, and Baltimore – the IHAs aim to improve access to education, free screenings, diagnosis, and follow-up care through tailored and local partnerships. These build on existing US partnerships to tackle cardiovascular disease, including the Health Assessments and Rapid Transformation (HEART) programme launched with the School of Global Health at Meharry Medical College last year.

In low- and middle-income countries, Novartis Global Health unit is currently running CHIs in Vietnam, Rwanda and Bolivia to reach patients beyond conventional commercial channels, with expansion planned to at least seven more countries by 2030. The model builds on a successful partnership in rural Vietnam that doubled control rates for high blood pressure and helped more people start treatment closer to their communities.

CARDIO4Cities, developed by the Novartis Foundation to support cities to improve heart health, is currently operational in eight countries and aims to expand to 23 countries by 2030. It brings together real-time data, AI, and partnerships to strengthen prevention, detection and management of cardiometabolic diseases, proactively reaching people in the community earlier. The approach has demonstrated three- to six-fold increases in hypertension control with associated reductions in stroke and heart attack rates within one to two years of implementation. It is currently operational in cities in Brazil (São Paulo, Fortaleza), the US (New York City), Belgium (Leuven), Portugal (Lisbon), Finland (Helsinki), Brunei, Singapore, and Australia (Sydney), with the ambition to reach 30 major cities in 23 countries by 2030.

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