

WHF Statement on Agenda Item 3.6: Addressing the global shortage of, and access to, medicines and vaccines

Honourable Chair, distinguished delegates,

The World Heart Federation commends the Secretariat for its comprehensive report. We welcome plans to develop a global reporting system for shortages and stock outs, which remain a persistent challenge for NCDs such as cardiovascular disease (CVD).

People living with CVD suffer acutely from poor access to medicines. The 2011 PURE Study shows that nearly 70% of CVD patients in LMICs do not receive medicines to manage their chronic conditions, such as hypertension. This figure rises to over 80% for patients in LICs.¹

Similarly, the generic drug Benzathine Penicillin G (or 'BPG') has been on the WHO Essential Medicines List since 1977. Monthly injections of this drug in rheumatic fever patients can prevent progression to rheumatic heart disease, yet despite its potential to save money and lives, countries continue to experience shortages of BPG today, resulting in costlier outcomes.²

The report notes that the high percentage of health spending on medicines (20-60% in low- and middle-income countries)³ is a barrier to progress, and is unsustainable. However, increased investments in health and supply chain systems can speed up progress towards UHC, and result in long-term economic and social benefits, a case supported by leading economists.⁴

We therefore call on Member States to increase resources allocated to improving access to medicines, and prioritise the following actions:

1. **Invest in robust health information systems to monitor and report the burden of CVD at the national level**, to match supply of essential medicines with demand.
2. **Support the development, implementation and monitoring** of national medicines policies, to ensure the inclusion of essential cardiovascular and NCD medicines, such as those listed among the Best Buys.⁵
3. **Work with all stakeholders, including the pharmaceutical industry as appropriate**, to support the development of local and regional manufacturing and supply capacity. The recently launched Coalition for Access to NCD Medicines & Products serves as an example of multi-sectoral collaboration aiming to increase access to NCD essential medicines.

Thank you for your attention.

¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21872920>

² http://rhdaction.org/sites/default/files/RHD%20Action_Global%20Status%20of%20BPG%20Report_Online%20Version.pdf

³ http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB142/B142_13-en.pdf

⁴ [http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(15\)00242-1/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(15)00242-1/fulltext)

⁵ http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB140/B140_27-en.pdf?ua=1