Nonempty Shelves: Diabetes Supplies, There When Needed

Project Summary

BACKGROUND

Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) have replaced infectious diseases as the primary causes of morbidity and mortality around the world. This class of diseases, particularly cancers, cardiovascular disease, chronic lung diseases, and diabetes, is now the leading cause of deaths in all regions of the world, with the exception of Africa. Low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) are burdened with 74 percent of all NCD-related mortality. Morbidity of these diseases is also increasing in low-resource settings; in Africa alone, the prevalence of diabetes is anticipated to increase 109 percent over the next 20 years.

The rising prevalence of diabetes and other NCDs places a large burden on working-age populations, impacting family finances and stifling economic productivity in LMICs. Moreover, increased prevalence of these diseases threatens to erode advances made toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals and will similarly impact progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the future.

Access to essential medicines and technologies (EMTs) is essential to reducing the impact of diabetes and other NCDs on individual health, families, and economies. However, EMTs for NCDs are often unavailable or unaffordable in low-resource settings and are less likely to be available than EMTs for acute illness.

PATH is implementing the No Empty Shelves project to gather evidence and mobilize the NCD and broader global health communities to improve the availability of affordable EMTs for NCDs in low-resource settings, with an initial focus on diabetes.

OBJECTIVES

PATH will pursue the following objectives:

1. Strengthen the global evidence base on availability of affordable essential medicines and technologies for diabetes in LMICs.
2. Raise awareness of major barriers to availability of affordable diabetes EMTs.
3. Build a network of key stakeholders committed to taking action to increase the availability of affordable EMTs for diabetes and other NCDs.

ACTIVITIES

Under the guidance of a technical advisory committee composed of global leaders in diabetes and supply chain management, PATH will produce a global report summarizing current understanding of the availability of diabetes EMTs in public and private facilities. Factors influencing availability and affordability will also be explored. Kenya and Senegal will participate in comprehensive supply chain assessments, including availability and price of diabetes EMTs. The assessments will provide greater understanding of barriers and enablers to availability and affordability found in countries with contrasting health logistics structures. The project will conclude with the development of a Call to Action that will define a road map for future global engagement to improve the access to EMTs for diabetes and other NCDs. PATH will secure commitments to pursue these actions from a wide range of organizations and define recommended mechanisms for implementing this road map. Project activities are led by PATH and financed through a partnership with Novo Nordisk.

By initiating coordinated action to address the barriers to the procurement, supply, and distribution of EMTs for diabetes, PATH hopes to contribute to and accelerate attainment of the World Health Organization’s target of achieving 80 percent availability of the affordable basic technologies and essential medicines required to treat NCDs in both public- and private-sector facilities by 2025, as outlined in the Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of NCDs.