



Addressing the Challenges of Noncommunicable Diseases: *Health Systems*

“Non-communicable diseases have emerged as growing health problems for countries in every corner of the globe.”
- U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius

THE RISE OF NCDs

Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) such as cancer and diabetes represent an urgent and growing global public health emergency, resulting in over 9 million deaths before the age of 60 per year. 80% of the annual 35 million NCD deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries. The chronic care associated with NCDs requires long-term routine clinic visits, testing, and medications.

U.S. HELPS STRENGTHEN COUNTRY HEALTH SYSTEMS

Through the U.S. Global Health Initiative (GHI), the U.S. government supports countries as they work to improve the health of their own people. It builds health systems — training health workers, establishing disease monitoring and laboratory systems, and repairing health clinics — so cost-effective improvements in health can continue for generations. Among priorities related to health system strengthening, it is important to incorporate disease management into existing systems, rather than create parallel systems; strengthen preventive care to pre-empt the development of disease where possible; and ensure treatment of disease when it causes little or no morbidity to prevent development of disability.

Given the long-term care that people living with HIV require, programs supported by the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) have helped to develop systems for chronic disease management in many partner countries. As part of GHI, PEPFAR is working to

strengthen health systems by training physicians, building medical infrastructure, and purchasing medical equipment.

PEPFAR investments also improve systems for delivering medications and other health commodities. Through stronger supply systems, countries can access preferential pricing through bulk purchases, build relationships with pharmaceutical providers, and ensure consistent delivery of health products.

US Global Health Investments:

- Increasing the number of health workers
- Building medical infrastructure
- Purchasing lifesaving medical equipment

BENEFITS FOR THE NCD RESPONSE

NCDs and their risk factors are best addressed throughout the course of people’s lives through healthy behaviors, prevention, early diagnosis, and treatment that begins before pregnancy and continue through childhood and adult life. Fostering meaningful community participation and engagement along with active partnerships among multiple stakeholders is imperative.

With stronger health systems, countries are better positioned to respond to the health needs of their people. GHI’s efforts to strengthen health systems in developing countries will help countries to effectively address an increasing burden of NCDs for present and future generations.