

Novartis announces broad range of initiatives to respond to COVID-19 Pandemic; Creates USD 20 million global fund to support impacted communities

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- *Novartis COVID-19 Response Fund will provide grants of up to USD 1 million to support communities around the world most impacted by the Coronavirus outbreak*
- *Novartis to join collaborative R&D efforts with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Wellcome, and Mastercard -supported COVID-19 Therapeutics Accelerator and a partnership with the Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI)*
- *Commitments build on Sandoz pledge to maintain price stability of essential medicines and strong support of patients and healthcare systems*
- *Company continues to maintain strong focus on protecting employee health, ensuring supply of medicines for patients and smooth clinical trial operations*

Basel, March 17, 2020 - Vas Narasimhan, CEO of Novartis, said: *"We are dealing with an extraordinary and unprecedented public health crisis that requires an incredible level of involvement and collaboration across government, society and business. As a medicines company present in over 140 countries, we are stepping in to provide additional financial support to critical community or national programs that can help address urgent public health needs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Recognizing the power of working together as an industry, we are also bringing the talent and capabilities of our industry-leading R&D organization to two leading and important collaborative R&D initiatives."*

Novartis today announced a broad set of measures to support the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These measures include the creation of a global fund to support communities around the world impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the company's decision to join two key cross-industry R&D initiatives.

The Novartis COVID-19 Response Fund will provide USD 20 million in grants to support public health initiatives designed to help communities manage challenges posed by the pandemic. The company has established an accelerated global review process that will allow for quick approval and disbursement of individual grants of up to USD 1 million. The fund is open to grant applications that will be processed through Novartis affiliates in the countries. The fund will seek to provide financial grants for initiatives focused on but not limited to the following areas:

- Strengthening local and national healthcare infrastructure including funding of additional medical personnel, sourcing of medicines and medical equipment
- Establishing digital platforms for COVID-19 related data collection, remote delivery of healthcare and effective dissemination of important public health information
- Creating new or enhancing new community health programs specific to the pandemic response

Novartis has also entered new collaborative research efforts such as the COVID-19 Therapeutics Accelerator, coordinated by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Wellcome, and Mastercard, as well as a COVID-19 directed partnership organized by the Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI). Both are cross-sector collaborations that bring several pharmaceutical companies and expert academic institutions into coordinated research programs, with the aim of bringing the most promising molecules forward quickly without organizational barriers. Additionally, in response to an urgent call for research and development on coronavirus, issued by the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA), Novartis is contributing by making available several compounds from its libraries that are considered suitable for in vitro antiviral testing. In addition, the company is rapidly evaluating other existing products to see if any could be utilized beyond their approved indications in response to the pandemic.

Supporting Patients, Healthcare Providers and Systems

Earlier this month, Sandoz, the company's generics and biosimilars division was the first company to commit to keeping prices stable for a basket of essential medicines that may help in the treatment of coronavirus cases, specifically antivirals to reduce the impact of coronavirus and antibiotics to combat pneumonia.

Furthermore, Novartis has been monitoring the global pandemic situation closely. The company's primary concern has been the health and safety of associates and patients globally. Novartis continues to deliver its medicines to patients and healthcare providers around the world and does not anticipate supply chain disruption at this time given strong mitigation measures and inventory levels. The company has also activated mitigation plans to ensure ongoing drug supply and smooth operations for its over 500 clinical studies. As part of its efforts to protect employee health, effective Monday, March 16 2020, all Novartis associates within Europe, US and Canada are requested to work from home, with the exception of those working in laboratories, manufacturing sites and in the field. The company has also stepped up the utilization of digital engagement tools to support internal collaboration as well as outreach to healthcare professionals and customers.

About Novartis

Novartis is reimagining medicine to improve and extend people's lives. As a leading global medicines company, we use innovative science and digital technologies to create transformative treatments in areas of great medical need. In our quest to find new medicines, we consistently rank among the world's top companies investing in research and development. Novartis products reach nearly 800 million people globally and we are finding innovative ways to expand access to our latest treatments. About 109,000 people of more than 145 nationalities work at Novartis around the world. Find out more at <https://www.novartis.com>.

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List of links present in page

- <https://www.novartis.com/es-es/es-es/news/media-releases/novartis-announces-broad-range-initiatives-respond-covid-19-pandemic-creates-usd-20-million-global-fund-support-impacted-communities>
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