

Global Position Statement on Strengthening Health Systems

Key Takeaway Messages

- Communities globally are struggling to support growing healthcare needs. There are numerous challenges such as balancing efficiency with quality of care and outcomes, a growing aging population, and an increase of people living with chronic conditions. Global health systems must also be ready to respond to disruptions such as large-scale public health emergencies or a pandemic.
- BMS drives high-impact partnerships globally to strengthen healthcare systems by prioritizing inclusive innovation, patient access, and influencing global decisionmakers to advocate for improved and equitable access to care.
- BMS partners with organizations across sectors - ranging from trade groups to multi-stakeholder partnerships such as Access Accelerated, All.Can, and City Cancer Challenge.
- A core tenet of Bristol Myers Squibb's approach to strengthening health systems is through building healthcare capability through various mechanisms such as healthcare professional training and patient/community education. Through key partnerships, BMS has mobilized technical expertise and on-the-ground partners globally to design and implement solutions to supply chain management, primary care, and digital health needs.

Background

Communities globally are struggling to support growing healthcare needs. There are numerous challenges such as balancing efficiency with quality of care and outcomes, a growing aging population, and an increase of people living with chronic conditions. Global healthcare systems must also be ready to respond to disruptions such as large-scale public health emergencies or a pandemic. Another major challenge is lack of universal health coverage (UHC), and that is defined as everyone, everywhere, having access to health services they need without risking falling into financial hardship (including health promotion, prevention, diagnosis, and treatment). UHC is a major cornerstone of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and is the backbone of robust health systems that are needed to deliver greater global health equity and health security.

Despite the growing need, there is a lack of access to services that can help advance good, sustainable health for all. There is also limited health professionals, lack of infrastructure necessarily to carry out health services, budget cuts at the government level to limit funding of healthcare, etc. Approximately half of the world has limited access to essential health services and 400 million have no access to any health services.¹ Further, despite best efforts, health systems, especially in low- and middle-income countries, are under resourced and in need of further development and support.² It is also estimated that around two billion people have no access to essential medicines.³ The COVID-19 pandemic has severely exacerbated these challenges, testing the resilience of national health systems worldwide, and led to significant delays in diagnosis and affected treatment outcomes and outlook for patients.

BMS's Commitment to Strengthening Health Systems

BMS believes we need strong and resilient healthcare systems. We focus on sustainable and holistic solutions to build strong and resilient healthcare systems. We strive to contribute in meaningful ways to enable holistic access solutions that address systemic challenges and root causes hindering access. Strengthening health systems requires a comprehensive approach and is a shared responsibility that requires partnership with a broad range of actors, including patients, healthcare providers, payers, governments, nonprofits, and civil society organizations. Collaboration across sectors is required to address challenges at scale. Key examples of strengthening health systems through high-impact partnerships include:

- Access Accelerated:

- BMS joined Access Accelerated at its inception in 2017 and today has a leadership role in the initiative. The vision for Access Accelerated is a future where no one dies prematurely from treatable, preventable diseases, and where all people living with or at risk of noncommunicable disease (NCDs) have access to appropriate, quality, and affordable prevention, treatment, and care. As part of that initiative, BMS and other member companies mobilize technical expertise and on-the-ground partners to design and implement solutions to supply chain, primary care, and digital health needs. For example, Access Accelerated is supporting the World Bank to accelerate sustainable and scalable NCD solutions by ensuring the inclusion of NCDs in Universal Health Coverage policies and increasing country NCD investments through sustainable health financing solutions.
- Since its inception six years ago, through Access Accelerated, 172 programs have been implemented so far, in 37 countries, including Botswana, South Africa and Lesotho, benefiting over 700 million patients with NCDs.⁴
- Access Accelerated private sector members have invested ~\$25 million, which has generated over \$350 million additional investments from the World Bank and resulted in partnerships with 15 governments around the world, which committed new public investment and developed supporting policies.⁵
- All.Can:
 - BMS is a founding member of All.Can, an international multi-stakeholder initiative focused on making cancer care more efficient by making best use of existing human, financial, infrastructural, and technological resources. All.Can includes a global network as well as 20 national chapters in high- and middle-income countries. Today, the All.Can global network includes +350 multidisciplinary partners, including cancer patient organizations, healthcare professionals, researchers, industry, and decision-makers from around the world. All.Can not only contributes new data and evidence on best practices in efficient cancer care, but also takes it a step further and implements efficient cancer care practices through its global network of partners.
- City Cancer Challenge:
 - BMS has partnered with City Cancer Challenge to strengthen cancer care pathways in LMICs through various initiatives. In 2021- 2022, we supported C/Can build policy capabilities, including a common policy methodology and a set of tools supporting cities and local experts. In 2023, BMS is supporting a new project to define indicators applicable to measuring quality of cancer care in low- and middle-income countries, led by City Cancer Challenge together with the Institute of Cancer Policy (ICP) at Kings College London and in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO). Finally, in May 2023, the WHO launched the implementation of its Global Breast Cancer Initiative, with the aim of reducing breast cancer mortality worldwide by 2.5% each year. This would mean 2.5 million lives saved over twenty years. The WHO is partnering with City Cancer Challenge (C/Can) to implement the initiative, and BMS is a core partner supporting the effort through knowledge sharing and funding support.

Bristol Myers Squibb Position

- Health systems globally are straining to support growing healthcare needs. Furthermore, COVID-19 has compounded existing access challenges and disrupted care, exposing the fragility of health systems and the severity of social and health inequities within and across societies around the globe. It has also highlighted the critical role of the biopharmaceutical industry in inclusively discovering, developing, and delivering medicines, as well as of cross-sector collaboration to address the enablers of access to life-saving innovations - namely strong health systems and actions to address the broader, deeply rooted dynamics that influence access and health equity.⁶

- BMS drives high-impact partnerships to support inclusive innovation, patient access, & health system strengthening, and steer engagement with global decision-makers to advocate for improved & equitable access to care.
- Wide-reaching local stakeholder engagement and health systems strengthening are necessary to facilitate access to medicines, especially in countries with health systems that have been historically oriented towards fighting communicable and acute diseases and lack critical capacity and infrastructure.
- BMS stands together with other members of the global health community to support countries in accelerating their efforts to achieve UHC targets set in the SDGs.
- A core tenet of Bristol Myers Squibb's approach to strengthening health systems is through building healthcare capability through various mechanisms such as healthcare professional training and patient/community education. This includes partnering with stakeholders at the local, regional and global levels to shape policy. We believe this is a prerequisite to delivering an improved healthcare system that understands patient access and outcomes require support beyond just the medicines themselves.
- At BMS, we promote health equity globally and strive to increase access to life-saving medicines for populations affected by serious diseases and conditions, giving hope and help to some of the world's most vulnerable people.

¹ https://www.improvingphc.org/sites/default/files/2018PHCPI_VitalSignsReport_1.pdf

² <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240040618>

³ <https://www.who.int/publications/10-year-review/chapter-medicines.pdf>

⁴ <https://ncdalliance.org/printpdf/news-events/news/ncd-alliance-partner-access-accelerated-highlights-progress-made-in-six-year-report>

⁵ <https://ncdalliance.org/printpdf/news-events/news/ncd-alliance-partner-access-accelerated-highlights-progress-made-in-six-year-report>

⁶ <https://www.bms.com/assets/bms/us/en-us/pdf/global-access-report.pdf>