

The Secretary
Expert Committee on the Selection and Use of Essential Medicines
Innovation, Access and Use (IAU)
Department of Essential Medicines and Health Products
20 Avenue Appia
CH-1211 Geneva 27
emlsecretariat@who.int

February 21, 2017

Dear Committee Members:

On behalf of the Global Health Technologies Coalition (GHTC) and its members, we submit this letter in support of the proposal to establish a World Health Organization (WHO) Model List of Essential in Vitro Diagnostics (EDL). Our members have had direct first-hand experience with the Model List of Essential Medicines (EML) and the impact it has made on access to medicines. It is time we saw a similar impact on diagnostics.

Diagnostic tests are critical to health care. They allow evidence-based rather than syndrome-based treatment. Unfortunately, diagnostics receive much less attention than vaccines and drugs. Despite recent investments in global health diagnostics, their impact and value has not been seen in all countries. This is particularly true in low- and middle-income countries where disease burdens are high and diagnosis remains a critical gap in care.

We believe a WHO EDL will prove invaluable as a guide for countries to establish national EDLs, in the same way that country-level Essential Medicines Lists have been adopted based on the EML. This will improve patient outcomes, reduce antimicrobial resistance, and enhance responses to emerging infectious threats. In addition, by focusing stakeholders (e.g., countries, nongovernmental organizations, civil society, and funders) on diagnostics, partnerships to address implementation difficulties can become possible. These hurdles to effective implementation include device and laboratory regulation for quality, training of medical technologists, establishment of robust supply chains and courier systems, and affordability.

In short, establishment of an EDL modeled after the EML would be an important step forward for health care globally. We respectfully urge the committee to approve the proposal at its 21st meeting.

Sincerely,

 **AERAS**
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Pediatric AIDS
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child has
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Infectious Diseases Society of America
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Medicines for Malaria Venture

