

GHTC welcomes creation of WHO Essential Diagnostics List

Action by WHO follows global advocacy campaign led by GHTC and partners

Washington, DC—June 15, 2017: The Global Health Technologies Coalition (GHTC) welcomes a [landmark decision](#) by the World Health Organization (WHO) to establish a new Essential Diagnostics List (EDL) to guide governments on the vital diagnostic tools that should be made available through healthcare systems. Diagnostics are an essential component of delivering quality care, yet currently WHO does not maintain a list of recommended diagnostic tools, as it does for medicines through its Model List of Essential Medicines (EML).

This decision by WHO follows a global advocacy campaign led by researchers at McGill University, University of Michigan, GHTC, FIND, and other organizations, [urging WHO](#) to establish an EDL to complement the existing EML and guide countries in procuring diagnostics needed to enable safe and appropriate use of medicines on the EML.

Diagnostic tools are critical to ensuring patients receive the right treatment, reducing the overuse of antibiotics, and enabling an effective response to disease outbreaks. However, access to diagnostic tools remains a considerable challenge in many low- and middle-income countries, either because existing tools are too costly and not appropriate for low-resource settings, or because diagnostic tests have not yet been developed for many neglected diseases. The creation of an EDL could help advance diagnostic access by helping countries better prioritize diagnostic testing and infrastructure needs, improving affordability by facilitating bulk purchasing, and spurring development of new in vitro diagnostics (IVDs) by identifying unmet diagnostic needs and informing the efforts of diagnostic developers, industry, and donor funders.

“No person should receive the wrong treatment for want of the right diagnostic tool,” said Jamie Bay Nishi, director of GHTC. “Diagnostics are a vital component of delivering quality health care worldwide. We applaud WHO’s decision to establish an Essential Diagnostics List. It’s a simple, cost-effective approach that will improve diagnostic access and innovation and ultimately save lives.”

As a first step in creating the EDL, WHO is establishing a new Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE) on IVDs. The SAGE will advise WHO on global diagnostic policies, as well as the development of the EDL. Initially, the EDL will focus on priority areas such as tuberculosis, malaria, HIV, and Hepatitis B and C, but it will be expanded as soon as possible to include a wider range of diagnostics if sufficient resources are available.

“WHO took a welcome step forward this week in establishing an expert advisory body to stand up an Essential Diagnostics List,” said Nishi. “It is now imperative that WHO member nations ensure the agency has the financial resources it needs to fully implement the Essential Diagnostics List so it can serve as an effective guiding force in improving access to diagnostics globally.”

About GHTC

The Global Health Technologies Coalition (GHTC) works to save and improve lives by encouraging the research and development of essential health technologies. We are a coalition of more than 25 nonprofit organizations advancing policies to accelerate the creation of new drugs, vaccines, diagnostics, and other health tools that bring healthy lives within reach for all people. GHTC is housed at PATH. Learn more at www.ghtcoalition.org.