



Hootsuite®
Social
Media

The number of hours in your day isn't going to change. How many you spend on social will.

hootsuite.com



Matthew Herper Forbes Staff

I cover science and medicine, and believe this is biology's century.

PHARMA & HEALTHCARE 9/30/2015 @ 8:34AM | 5,648 views

Novartis CEO: Here's How We'll Get Cheap Medicine To Poor Countries



GUEST POST WRITTEN BY
Joseph Jimenez
CEO, Novartis AG

Requesting survey...

This week, leaders from around the world are converging in New York City for the 70th annual United Nations General Assembly. On Friday, [Pope Francis](#) spoke to the UN. Of the many pressing issues on the table, one theme has emerged: how can we make progress towards achieving sustainable development in countries with more limited resources?

At Novartis, we discover new ways to improve and extend life. Not only do we need to serve people who live in countries that can afford treatment, but we should also help expand access to the most underserved populations.

However, donations and one-off philanthropy are not enough. While programs that provide cash and free products to people in the developing world have helped to some extent, they are often one time in nature, and do not deliver a lasting impact. In addition, they are subject to the ups and downs of the marketplace. If business is good, donations are plenty. But what happens if business isn't good?

What's needed are social business programs – or innovative business models that build local, sustainable capabilities – which create an impact for society that can endure over time.



Using foods we already have to end hunger.

Donate \$5 Today



That is why we just announced Novartis Access, a new social business model where we will offer a portfolio of 15 on- and off-patent medicines for \$1 per treatment per month to patients in low- and low- to middle-income countries. These products have been selected based on the World Health Organization's essential medicines list and are among the most commonly prescribed medicines in these countries, where nearly 75% of non-communicable disease (NCD) deaths occur. This portfolio addresses the top seven causes of death in these areas, and the four main types of NCDs: cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, respiratory illnesses and cancer.

Novartis Access is unprecedented in terms of scope. Our goal is to roll it out using a phased approach in 30 countries spanning Africa, Asia, Latin America and Central Eastern Europe. The first countries we are in discussion with are Kenya, Ethiopia and Vietnam. These three countries have significant and diverse access challenges, yet also have existing Novartis presence on the ground, allowing for full engagement. The learnings from the markets will be essential to our plans for expanding to additional countries.

We already have experience navigating access challenges in the developing world through a variety of approaches, including philanthropy, zero-profit and social ventures. Novartis Access builds on this work to make medicines available to people who need them – from treatments for malaria to leprosy – and takes our efforts to the next level.

But we at Novartis are only one piece of the puzzle. Tools like the Access to Medicines Index are useful in encouraging the pharmaceuticals industry to improve access. Collaboration will be also key to success. We will work together with governments, NGOs, and private sector partners to strengthen healthcare systems by addressing fundamental issues such as a lack of disease awareness, a shortage of trained professionals, and weak distribution channels.

Governments in emerging economies are already starting to create building blocks for addressing these challenges. For example, the Ethiopian government has made some key improvements to local healthcare infrastructure. Over the past 10 years, it has expanded health services to local citizens, quadrupling the number of small health posts or clinics and [increasing the number of public hospitals by nearly 40%](#). Partnerships with governments, NGOs and others active in this space will be crucial to building on improvements like those in Ethiopia to ensure patients are properly educated, diagnosed and treated.

When it comes to healthcare, all stakeholders – patients, service providers, pharmaceutical companies and governments – know that something needs to change. With this week's high-level events bringing together powerful stakeholders from around the globe, there is an opportunity to align on how we can best work together to solve these problems. The business world is well aware of the immense opportunities in developing markets, but it is also our responsibility to recognize and address critical social and health issues that impede progress. I believe that a

commercially sustainable, social business approach can together with all stakeholders make a powerful long-term impact for the people who need it.

Joseph Jimenez, is CEO of Novartis AG.

RECOMMENDED BY FORBES

[Novartis Heart Failure Drug Gains Speedy FDA Approval](#)

[Novartis, Juno Killer T-Cells Show Promise In Another Blood Cancer](#)

[Novartis' Summer Blockbuster LCZ696 Gains A Name, Skips An Advisory Panel](#)

[Is The Superiority Of Entresto Just An Illusion?](#)

[The Cloud 100](#)

[Yes, You Can Leave A Job Interview -- Here's How](#)

[The Richest Person In Every State](#)

[4 Essential Tips To Becoming A Better Leader](#)