

25 September 2020

Statement from HAI/ACCISS Study Following WHO Meeting, *Insulin and Associated Devices: Access for Everybody*

In 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) Expert Committee on the Selection and Use of Essential Medicines reported the need for a wide understanding of the complexities of access to insulin, and recommended that WHO prioritises a series of actions to address the issues of insulin access and affordability. These actions included establishing a working group on access to insulin, adding insulin to WHO's prequalification programme, developing a comprehensive approach to address insulin price issues, consulting with Member States and others to clarify other access barriers at country level, and more.

We are pleased that WHO has taken first steps, including the inclusion of human insulin in the prequalification programme and hosting this week's four-day virtual meeting: *Insulin and associated devices: Access for Everybody*. One of the outcomes of the meeting was the announcement of the development of a Global Diabetes Compact. We look with interest to see how this initiative addresses access to treatment and care for people who use insulin.

It is clear that decisive and urgent action is needed to address this issue. Firstly, WHO must meaningfully engage with people living with diabetes who use insulin, including through membership of working groups, to ensure a people-centred approach. We have seen in the presentations this week that insulin availability remains poor for many, treatment is simply out of reach for people who have to pay, and other issues continue to impact access. This is unacceptable. WHO must focus on these areas, and engage and support Member States to ensure insulin, delivery devices and blood monitoring tools are quality-assured, available, affordable and used appropriately.

A resolution on improving access to insulin will be proposed for the 74th World Health Assembly in 2021, coinciding with the centenary of the discovery of insulin. We hope that Member States, WHO and others working to improve access to insulin and care will support the resolution.

Health Action International (HAI), as the lead of the Addressing the Challenge and Constraints of Insulin Sources and Supply (ACCISS) Study, has, together with the University of Geneva, been working to improve access to insulin for many years and have extensively researched the global insulin market. We remain committed to working with WHO and other partners to ensure that, 100 years after its discovery, we mark a turning point in addressing the issue of access to insulin globally.

Health Action International is a non-profit organisation that conducts research and advocacy to advance policies that enable access to medicines and rational medicine use for all people around the world. We pursue advocacy from the patient level up to the highest levels of government through our 'official relations' status with the World Health Organization and respected relationship with the European Medicines Agency. To safeguard our objectivity and integrity, we are resolutely independent of the pharmaceutical industry and protect ourselves from all other conflicts of interest.