

Updates from the Field

Protecting Health and Building Capacity Globally

Winter 2013, Issue 13

CDC, PAHO and other global partners move forward with the Global Standardized Hypertension Treatment Project

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Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are responsible for almost three quarters of all deaths worldwide. These include deaths caused by injuries such as motor vehicle injuries, and chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, and chronic respiratory diseases. High blood pressure, also called hypertension, is a leading risk factor for cardiovascular disease and is responsible for over nine million preventable deaths globally each year. According to Dr. Sonia Angell, Chief of the Non-Communicable Disease Unit in Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Center for Global Health (CGH), Division of Global Health Protection and CGH's Senior Advisor for Global NCDs, "The broad-scale control of hypertension is challenging for all countries across the income spectrum, yet we have models that demonstrate it is possible and feasible – including in low- and middle-income countries." Successful treatment of hypertension involves the prescription, availability, and adherence to appropriate medications, and sustained long-term monitoring and adjustment of medications. Conditions that impede hypertension control include complex treatment regimens, limited availability and affordability of medications, and health care systems that are overburdened and under-resourced.

To address the growing challenges with hypertension control globally, CDC in collaboration with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and other partners, is launching the Global Standardized Hypertension Treatment Project. This project involves the development and implementation of a framework for standardizing the medical treatment of hypertension. The framework was inspired by successful treatment models for infectious



Global Standardized Hypertension Treatment Project Workshop participants, March 2013, Miami, Florida.

diseases such as those applied in global tuberculosis and HIV management. Central elements include a structured treatment approach with a core set of medications, treatment protocols with targets, and patient cohort monitoring. The project design aims to be feasible and flexible so it can be applied worldwide and complement existing hypertension guidelines.

Project development will first focus on the Latin American and Caribbean region. In March 2013, CDC and PAHO convened experts, including physicians, pharmacologists, epidemiologists, and other leadership from ministries of health, professional organizations, and institutions in the region to support the development of the framework for improving hypertension control worldwide. Key components include:

Medication Treatment: Identification of a core set of medications appropriate for the treatment of most adults with hypertension.

- **Availability of Core Medications:** Identification of mechanisms to increase the broad scale availability of the core set of medications. For the Latin American and Caribbean region, the PAHO Strategic Fund recently added to its Medicine List

additional medications from the core set identified during the March workshops (www.paho.org/strategicfund).

- **Key Elements of Care Delivery:** Recommendations for key elements of care delivery to support effective hypertension treatment.

In the ensuing months, CDC in collaboration with regional and global partners will develop a plan to broaden stakeholder engagement and continually invite contributions to refine the approach. CDC and colleagues are starting implementation work with interested countries in the LAC region. Lessons learned will inform global dissemination of the framework to improve hypertension control worldwide.

For further information about the Global Standardized Hypertension Treatment Project and to engage in implementation of the framework, please visit the following website: <http://www.cdc.gov/globalhealth/ncd/hypertension-treatment.htm> or contact globalncds@cdc.gov.