

Global Standardized Hypertension Treatment Project

Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) are responsible for almost three quarters of all deaths worldwide most of which are attributable to cardiovascular diseases (CVD) such as heart attack and stroke. Raised blood pressure, otherwise known as hypertension, is the main risk factor for CVD and is responsible for over nine million preventable deaths globally each year.

The broad-scale control of hypertension is challenging yet feasible for all countries across the income spectrum, including in low and middle income countries. Successful treatment of hypertension involves the prescription of, 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 treatment of hypertension using medications. The framework was inspired by successful infectious disease models 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 Latin American and Caribbean region, where similar to the global situation, hypertension is common and it is poorly controlled. 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 their 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 were made.

The project's next steps include expanding regional and global partner engagement and starting implementation work with interested countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region. Lessons learned from regional implementation will inform global dissemination of the framework to improve hypertension control worldwide.