



IFPMA

ACHIEVING A HEALTHIER AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR ALL

Policy Perspectives on Universal
Health Coverage from the Innovative
Biopharmaceutical Industry

IN BRIEF



The innovative biopharmaceutical industry stands together with the global health community to support all countries in accelerating efforts to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

Here, we share our perspectives on UHC, and underscore its importance in fulfilling the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which provides a shared blueprint for achieving peace and prosperity for people and our planet through the realization of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

UHC is a journey unique to each country's needs and priorities, and there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Each country must deploy necessary resources to achieve them and must prioritize which health services to cover, what beneficiary population groups to cover, how to pay for those services, and how to ensure effective and efficient delivery in consultation with stakeholders.

Regardless of a country's unique needs, no single organization or sector can achieve UHC on its own and in recognition of the need to move together towards achieving UHC, we are committed to playing our part.

Our Recommendations for Achieving UHC

Uphold Quality Primary Healthcare (PHC)

Together, PHC and resilient health systems form the cornerstone of UHC. They are what enable UHC to be inclusive, to ensure no one is left behind. PHC is the package of essential health services — ranging from promotion and prevention to treatment, rehabilitation, and palliative care. A person receives these services across their life course, often beginning before birth and continuing through illness, injury, work, childbirth, aging, and the end of life. PHC is the frontline of a resilient health system, one which is able to prepare for, withstand the strain of, and respond to the public health consequences of disasters and emergencies. Therefore, we support policies that:

- **Create an evolving and responsible regulatory and legal system that sets an ethical framework, promotes responsiveness and inclusiveness of all stakeholders, and supports innovations.** This system must adapt to changing needs and comply with medical, public health, and business ethics in a period of rapid technological evolution and medical innovation.
- **Design PHC to be comprehensive, evidence-based, and grounded in a holistic, life-course approach.** Expand the package of benefits as more resources are available. Provide choices, empowering people to live and age well.
- **Improve quality, sustainability, and efficiency.** Avoid seeking only to lower costs, which can reduce the number of suppliers and result in a race to the bottom in quality, safety, and efficacy and increase the potential for supply disruptions.
- **Measure performance by the ability to reach the most vulnerable,** the capacity of institutions, financing, and operations.
- **Ensure systems integrate disease prevention and health promotion as a core strategy in PHC** — including well-equipped disease surveillance and response systems, health education, and screening; high performing and resilient routine immunization programs should be prioritized.
- **Foster integrated, multi-sectoral, people-centered approaches to reach every household with a basic package of PHC interventions and manage both infections and chronic conditions across the life course, leaving no one behind.** Countries should leverage the immunization touchpoints and roll out other interventions that will be part of a comprehensive PHC package to ensure that all those being reached also receive a core package of PHC services.
- **Recruit, educate, train, develop, and retain frontline health workers. Seek support of other relevant health professionals.** Improve health literacy amongst practitioners and the general public.
- **Promote innovation and harness a variety of technologies,** including digital technologies, to improve equitable access to health services, complement and enhance existing health service delivery models, and empower and enable people and communities to play an active role in their own health.



Invest More, Invest Better in Health

UHC is an investment in the foundation of a healthier, more sustainable future for all. Achieving UHC can also drive economic growth, development, and wealth. For UHC to become a reality, sufficient, sustained, and innovative financing mechanisms are required and new partnerships are needed. We must work together to ensure that more resources are invested, but also that they are invested better and efficiently. Therefore, we support policies that:

- **Ensure prioritization of (and enhancement of budget allocations to) health**, including disease prevention, in national budgets by setting appropriate national financing targets for quality investments which minimize out-of-pocket payments by patients and healthy people.
- **Create fiscal space for health** by improving efficiency and effectiveness of existing health budgets, including by reducing waste and corruption.
- **Finance with a range or mix of models.** Select a model tailored to a country's social and political framework, but one that ultimately will be sustainable.
- **Develop and enable innovative health financing mechanisms** tailored to the unique needs of each country, such as health insurance products and impact bonds.
- **Employ a whole-of-government, whole-of-society approach.** Move away from siloed health spending. Promote dialogue and multi-sectoral partnerships approaches across government and with other stakeholders.
- **Engage employers to include elements of health** in employee benefit packages or other incentives.
- **Promote digital health technologies to improve health system efficiency** and invest in suitable data ecosystems, including data infrastructure and strategies for data use.

Improve Access to Medicines and Vaccines

Medical innovation is not only a foundation of modern healthcare, but a critical element for achieving UHC. Access to safe, effective, quality, and affordable medicines and vaccines to prevent, manage or even cure disease fulfills the promise of innovative medical technologies as a key contributor to good health and well-being. Therefore, we support policies that:

- Enable medicines and vaccines to reach people by increasing **capacity in and harmonization between regulatory systems, strengthening supply chains, and improving health system infrastructure.**
- **Adopt regulatory standards that are consistent with scientific evidence** following best practices for safety, efficacy and quality standards to improve availability of innovative, generic and biosimilar medicines and vaccines.
- Implement **robust supply chains**, both to ensure efficient delivery of products and to prevent diversion or entry of substandard and falsified products.
- **Value new medicines and vaccines in ways that recognize and incentivize innovation and health outcomes**, taking into account willingness and ability to pay in the local context. Evaluate procurement and/or reimbursement of medicines and vaccines based on medical need and burden of disease, efficacy, available real-world evidence and infrastructural requirements.
- **Enhance competition in quality off-patent generic and biosimilar medicines** in the off-patent market to create both budget headroom for financing innovation and increased affordability of well-established treatments.
- **Ensure that procedures in procurement as well as reimbursement are predictable, transparent, provide mechanisms for appealing decisions, and respect appropriate commercial confidentiality.** Procurement criteria should not only focus on price but also on quality assurance and security of supply.
- **Remove tariffs and taxes** on medicines and vaccines.
- **Enable differential pricing, appropriate voluntary licensing agreements, and technology transfer arrangements that promote access to treatments** for patients in developing countries while respecting IP rights and the different economic and public health status between various countries.

Finally, policies should promote appropriate incentives, including the protection of intellectual property, to enable the development of breakthrough medicines and vaccines that are essential to address unmet medical needs. Together, UHC and innovation promotes continued global health progress and well-being for all.

Learn more about the innovative biopharmaceutical industry's policy perspectives on [Universal Health Coverage](https://www.universalhealthcoverage.org/) at [ifpma.org](https://www.ifpma.org)



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