

# ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE ACCESS: A SHARED COMMITMENT



**JOHN KETCHUM**, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, EMERGING GROWTH MARKETS, NOVARTIS ONCOLOGY

In emerging markets around the world health-care companies and governments are working together to develop sustainable access models that lead to better health care. In this article, Novartis Oncology describes the opportunities and challenges inherent in building and implementing these models in Asia, and how partnerships between governments and health-care companies are producing increasingly positive outcomes.



In Asia, health-care companies and governments work in close collaboration towards the shared goal of improving health care. From our perspective, these partnerships extend well beyond selling products and earning a return. We are passionate about pursuing a much larger goal – helping to build sustainable health-care systems that provide the best possible care. When this goal is achieved everyone benefits – governments, health-care companies, and most importantly, patients and the providers who serve them.

Each country has its own distinct challenges, so the first step is to listen and learn. We interact with government authorities to understand their exact needs, work together to solve challenges, and invest the expertise and resources required to implement those solutions. This commitment to partnerships is especially important in emerging markets,

where health ministers are seeking not only medicines, but support in developing every component of their health-care systems. Through engaging in a shared commitment, health-care companies and their government counterparts can earn mutual trust and find practical ways to advance cancer care and the treatment of patients.

Three challenges guide our efforts to develop sustainable access. The first is to create better awareness of disease states, medicines, innovative therapies and the effective use of those medicines and therapies. A second priority is developing infrastructure – working with countries to help advance research capabilities, improve health-care systems and enhance the medical knowledge of health care providers. A third priority is optimizing availability, or ensuring that medicines are made available to those who can benefit.



***Through engaging in a shared commitment, health-care companies and their government counterparts can earn mutual trust and find practical ways to advance cancer care and the treatment of patients***

Let us take a closer look at each priority, starting with awareness. In most countries in Asia, health authorities place a high priority on cancer. At the same time, many cancer diseases are rare and not widely understood, by patients, health authorities, or even health-care providers. In the same manner, cancer medicines and their benefits are often not well understood. Health-care companies need to work closely with all of these stakeholders, educating them about disease areas and the context in which medicines and therapies are being introduced to treat diseases.

Novartis works with oncologists, haematologists, and pathologists, as well as nurses and pharmacists, to advance their understanding of disease states and the medicines and therapies available to treat those diseases. We engage with

patient groups and advocates to help them learn more about disease states, potential treatments and the appropriate ways to use those medicines. Our team also uses a range of media to supplement our educational efforts – web sites, call centres and outreach to traditional media such as newspapers and magazines.

Our educational efforts extend to academia, where medical science liaisons work with thought leaders to support them as they strive to better understand cancer diseases and the increasing innovative treatment options that are available. We also help to educate payers, so they are more fully aware of the value that innovative oncology medicines provide to people living with cancer, to society at large, and to future generations.

The second is to focus on helping emerging markets develop the infrastructure required to advance health care. As these markets become more prosperous, governments invest in infrastructure to support economic growth. Health care companies can play a pivotal role, providing expertise in process development, medical research, technology systems, and the training of health-care providers.

In many countries, we partner with medical centres to help advance their research capabilities. Much of this work centres on conducting Novartis-initiated clinical trials that aid in the discovery and development of new medicines and



indications to benefit patients. We train trial managers in recruiting patients, collecting and interpreting data, meeting regulatory responsibilities and managing each phase of a Novartis-initiated trial.

This commitment to dramatically expand our research in Asia comes at a time when cancer treatment is on the verge of a great leap forward. We are moving from broadly-aimed treatments that kill rapidly dividing cells to treatments based on targeting genetic characteristics of cancer that “block” cancer-inducing pathways. As we continue to learn more about small molecules, we can attack genetic abnormalities more efficiently and aggressively.

Our pipeline targets cancers caused by the most frequent pathway-activating genetic alterations, including non small cell lung cancer; colorectal cancer; pancreatic cancer; melanoma; and breast cancer. We are helping medical centres to build their capabilities in pathology so that over time they are prepared to manage increasingly complex disease patterns and treatment strategies, and use this class of drugs to full effect.

Finally – ensuring availability – addresses the need to make medicines and therapies accessible to those who need them. This requires that health-care companies and health authorities demonstrate a high degree of flexibility and agility. In many cases, governments in emerging markets cannot afford to pay market prices for cancer medicines. In such cases, health-care companies must be prepared to adopt flexible economic models tailored to meet the specific needs of each country. They must work together with authorities in each country to develop the most appropriate pricing solutions for that country.

This may lead to one of several payment models. Among them are managed entry programmes, where total costs to treat a given patient population are capped. In some middle-income countries, government and health-care companies may share costs. In the poorest countries, in some cases health-care companies will donate product at no cost to help ensure patients remain on therapy.

Health authorities also have an important role to play in broadening the availability of medicines. Through ongoing

***Even in the least developed countries, expanding access and providing better care is now within our grasp***

dialogue with health-care companies, these leaders can design innovative approaches to regulatory review and approval, helping to accelerate delivery of new treatments to patients. Again, improving availability calls for health-care companies and health authorities to be adaptable and agile in seeking out solutions.

In markets around the globe, product availability can be further complicated by civil unrest, natural disasters, and economic crises. When such challenges arise, health-care companies and health authorities must collaborate to find creative solutions and ensure that medicines and treatments are made available to those in need.

Even in the least developed countries, expanding access and providing better care is now within our grasp. To achieve that end, Novartis is committed to building and nurturing strong partnerships with governments and their health authorities. Working together, we will continue to raise awareness of cancer diseases, therapies for those diseases and the appropriate use of those treatments. We will contribute to building the infrastructure required to advance the capabilities of health-care systems in emerging markets. We will be flexible and agile in determining the best ways to make more medicines available to more patients.

At Novartis, our mission is to care and cure. We believe the power of collaboration is what brings innovation to life. Working together, we can ensure that medicines can reach more people, and transform outcomes for people living with cancer around the world. ●

For more information

[www.novartisoncology.com](http://www.novartisoncology.com)