



# ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL MEDICINES FOR NONCOMMUNICABLE DISEASES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Appropriate and adequate management of people with noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) includes access to essential NCD medicines. **Disrupted access to chronic medication for hypertension, diabetes, heart disease, mental health disorders, cancer, and asthma could result in severe disease exacerbation and potentially death.**



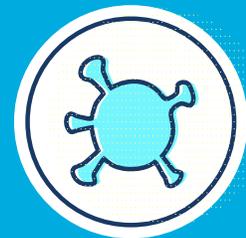
During the COVID-19 pandemic, people living with NCDs have experienced several challenges in accessing essential medications for chronic disease, such as:<sup>1</sup>



supply chain disruptions because of lockdowns all over the world have led to market stock-outs of some essential medications.



people living with NCDs may be unable to access providers for prescriptions for medications.



people living with NCDs may avoid going to the pharmacy for fear of exposure to COVID-19 limiting their ability to obtain medication.

This document provides guidance for health administrators to ensure people living with NCDs can have continued access to essential, life-saving medication.

## CONSIDERATIONS<sup>1-5</sup>



### Implement policies that facilitate access to a 90-day supply of medication

Having a long-term supply of medication ensures continued access to essential drugs for the management of NCDs. **Policies that can facilitate this include early refills, refills without a provider prescription, reduced co-pays for larger supplies, and education of people living with NCDs on the importance of drug adherence.**



## Facilitate physical access to medication supplies

Providing avenues for people living with NCDs to obtain medication refills without physically going to a pharmacy **will ensure continued access despite travel restrictions and COVID-19 fears.** Setting up home delivery services through community health worker networks and pharmacy partnerships is one approach to facilitate access to medication.



## Establish strong monitoring

Monitoring the stock and need for essential NCD medications helps plan medication supplies based on need. **This helps to plan for potential stock outs and obtain adequate supplies of NCD medication without overstocking.** Robust surveillance systems are needed to understand the burden of each NCD and the level of medication usage, over time.

## REFERENCES

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