

# Novartis US Foundation commits \$25M to improve health equity by reducing health disparities in the US

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- Building on \$10M+ commitments to date, US Foundation is providing up to an additional \$15M due to emergence of COVID-19 pandemic and elevated focus on social injustice
- Commitment to include partnerships and support to address the underrepresentation of minorities, including African American/Black and Hispanic communities, in clinical trials
- Reinforces US Foundation focus on improving health by strengthening health systems, eliminating barriers to care and addressing social determinants of health

EAST HANOVER, N.J., Sept. 16, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- Today the Novartis US Foundation announced a total commitment of USD 25 million to develop partnerships and fund community organizations and programs that address health inequities, with a focus on diversity in clinical trials, in the United States. This commitment reinforces the Novartis US Foundation mission to improve health in underserved communities in the United States by creating innovative and sustainable solutions to expand access to healthcare and build trust within the healthcare system.

"In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and heightened attention on racial injustice in the US, there has been new and significant recognition of disparities in care in minority communities. We have accelerated our commitment to create innovative and sustainable partnerships that have the potential to improve health equity in underserved communities, including African American/Black and Hispanic communities," said Tom Kendris, US Country President, Novartis Corporation, Chairman, Board of Trustees, Novartis US Foundation.

Since re-focusing its mission last year, the Novartis US Foundation has committed more than USD 10 million to develop partnerships to enable healthcare systems to better meet the needs of their patients by addressing barriers to care, or by identifying changes needed to address the underlying causes of health disparities. This support included signature partnerships with New Jersey Primary Care Association, The CDC Foundation, Institute for Healthcare Improvement and USD 5 million to support COVID-19 response efforts, including 40 grants to support local communities.

A key area of focus for the additional commitment will be in addressing the vast underrepresentation of minorities, including Black Americans, in clinical trials. In 2019, African Americans/Blacks made up 13.5% of the US population, but only 9% of clinical trial participants<sup>1,2</sup>. Diversity in clinical trials is critical to understanding how medicines will work in all patient populations impacted by the disease.

"We believe the Novartis US Foundation can serve as a catalyst for change through a multi-year, multi-million dollar commitment. As part of this effort, we will collaborate with partners and support industry-wide programs to improve diversity in clinical trials through systemic and policy-driven solutions that go beyond calls to study

sponsors to be more inclusive," continued Kendris.

There are several barriers to clinical trial participation reflective of other systemic issues leading to disparities in health such as, mistrust of the healthcare system, a lack of comfort or understanding of health systems, including clinical trial processes, as well as time and resource constraints associated with participation<sup>3</sup>. The US Foundation is in the exploration phase to identify all dimensions of these issues and to identify new collaborators from the public, private and advocacy sectors.

#### About Social Determinants of Health and Health Disparities

CDC defines social determinants of health as the conditions – social, economic and physical – in places where people live, learn, work and play that influence health outcomes of people<sup>2</sup>. These conditions may include safe and affordable housing, access to education, food security, and clean environments<sup>2</sup>. When health outcomes are better or worse from one population to the next, there is disparity. Health disparities have impacts reaching far beyond those directly affected by limiting advancements in care and resulting in avoidable costs<sup>3</sup>. For example, the American Public Health Association found racial disparities in health led to an estimated \$93 billion in excess medical care costs and \$42 billion in lost productivity<sup>4</sup>.

#### About the Novartis US Foundation

The Novartis US Foundation is a 501(c)(3) charitable foundation established by Novartis to support philanthropic efforts in the United States. The mission of the Novartis US Foundation is to improve health in underserved communities in the United States by creating innovative and sustainable solutions to expand access to healthcare and build trust within the healthcare system. We do this by supporting sustainable programs and partnerships that strengthen health systems, eliminate barriers to quality health services, and enhance local communities.

#### About Novartis

Located in East Hanover, NJ Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation – an affiliate of Novartis – is reimagining medicine to improve and extend people's lives. As a leading global medicines company, we use innovative science and digital technologies to create transformative treatments in areas of great medical need. In our quest to find new medicines, we consistently rank among the world's top companies investing in research and development. Novartis employs about 15,000 people in the United States. For more information, please visit <https://www.novartis.us>.

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## List of links present in page

- <https://www.novartis.com/us-en/us-en/news/media-releases/novartis-us-foundation-commits-25m-improve-health-equity-reducing-health-disparities-us>
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