

# Research and Development for Health in Kenya

## The Advocacy Coalition for Health Research and Development (CHReaD)

### INTRODUCTION

Research and development (R&D) is critical to ensuring that high-impact, affordable health technologies reach the people who need them most. In low- and middle-income countries, a policy and regulatory environment that encourages innovation can lead to enhanced economic growth and better social outcomes. Moreover, domestic investment in health R&D guarantees that solutions reflect a country's priority health needs.

The government of Kenya has demonstrated its support for health R&D, passing a number of policies and strategies in recent years aimed at bolstering the country's innovation agenda. Accompanying these policies are multiple commitments—both regional and international—to increase funding for R&D activities. Although Kenya's robust policy framework and funding commitments are commendable, additional advocacy is needed to ensure that important health R&D-related policies are implemented and that actual investment matches government commitments.

#### Landscape of Kenya's R&D and Regulatory Environment for Health

To better understand health R&D challenges in Kenya and identify solutions, PATH commissioned the Council on Health Research for Development (COHRED) to conduct a landscape analysis of policies, advocacy initiatives, stakeholders, and funding trends related to health R&D and regulatory processes. The executive summary of this report is [available online](#).



PATH/Josphine Kinyanjui

*In late 2015, stakeholders agreed on the value of a health R&D advocacy coalition; existing advocacy coalitions in Kenya are largely focused on specific diseases, technologies, or health-issue areas. CHReaD's advocacy agenda, however, cuts across health issues.*

### LAUNCH OF THE COALITION FOR HEALTH RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Recognizing the potential of advocacy to impact Kenya's innovation system, a group of nongovernmental organizations has launched the Coalition for Health Research and Development (CHReaD).

Each member organization has a history of advocating for improved health technologies, programs, and services—from HIV and tuberculosis, to noncommunicable diseases, to maternal, newborn, and child health. Through coordinated advocacy, CHReaD will underscore the importance of health R&D in increasing access to lifesaving technologies across the health spectrum. CHReaD will enable all member organizations to achieve mutually shared goals that support the research and development of high-impact health technologies in Kenya.

## ADVOCACY AGENDA

CHReaD advocates for increased investment in health R&D, evidence-based policy change and implementation, and a streamlined regulatory system. Through partnership, evidence generation, and accountability measures, CHReaD will advocate for:

- **Increased budget allocation to health R&D by the government.** Meeting current funding commitments and ensuring the availability of resources for local innovators will help grow Kenya's R&D sector and ensure that R&D priorities are locally generated. Specifically, 2 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) should be allocated to R&D, as committed in the Science, Technology, and Innovation Act of 2013.
- **Improved efficiency of the regulatory system,** ensuring that regulatory bodies are coordinated and research approval processes are clear and streamlined. The East African Community (EAC) Medicines Regulatory Authority (MRH) initiative, to which Kenya is a signatory, promotes regional harmonization of medicines registration. This initiative should also be prioritized as a model for sharing best practices and fast-tracking registration of medicines for priority diseases.
- **Strengthened capacity of health researchers, innovators, and institutions,** a critical step in accelerating the discovery and invention of new health technologies. The coalition also supports efforts to increase collaboration between researchers and incentivize health R&D activities.
- **Implementation of existing policies related to health R&D.** The Kenyan government has established a robust policy framework for managing, coordinating, and funding R&D, but the implementation of these policies is often slow. CHReaD calls for increased accountability for policies and commitments that have not yet been implemented.

### CHReaD's Mission:

To catalyze action on health R&D through coordinated advocacy efforts to increase access to lifesaving products, technologies, and innovations.

Advocates and technical experts from across the health spectrum understand the importance of R&D in ensuring that health products are available to those most in need. CHReaD brings these stakeholders together to elevate this common message and to ensure that health R&D is prioritized as a means of growing Kenya's economy and guaranteeing a higher quality of life for its people.

### HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Any legally registered organization or institution interested in health R&D advocacy in Kenya may apply to join CHReaD. Currently, the coalition's secretariat is hosted at PATH offices in Nairobi, Kenya. Please contact Pauline Irungu ([pirungu@path.org](mailto:pirungu@path.org)), research and development advocacy officer at PATH, for more information about how to become involved.



PATH/Wendy Stone