FIND PARTNERS WITH GLUCOSE TEST STRIP MANUFACTURERS TO IMPROVE AFFORDABILITY OF BLOOD GLUCOSE SELF-MONITORING IN LOW- AND MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES

- **Uncontrolled diabetes elevates the risk of infection-induced complications and death – diabetes is one of the most frequently reported co-morbidities leading to complications in people with COVID-19**
- **Agreements with i-SENS and SD Biosensor bring prices for blood glucose test strips to US$0.05 for healthcare buyers in low- and middle-income countries**
- **Through FIND, public and private sector buyers can access this pricing directly from the manufacturers**

Geneva, Switzerland – 18 August 2021 – FIND, the global alliance for diagnostics, announced today that agreements have been signed with i-SENS, Inc (Seoul, South Korea) and SD BIOSENSOR, Inc (Suwon-si, South Korea), to increase low- and middle-income country (LMIC) access to blood glucose test strips by improving affordability. Depending on specific strip and meter needs, but regardless of the volumes ordered, strip prices have been negotiated to US$0.05 per strip and meters may be provided free of charge. The agreements also include prices for lancets, control solutions and meter download cables.

The US$0.05 free-on-board price is in line with ex-works prices specified in a UNICEF target product profile,[1] excluding shipment and onward logistics. It is available to buyers operating in LMICs with a commitment to global access terms. There are no minimum order quantities for strips, and the manufacturers offer different terms for variable meter and strip requirements. The price is now available by contacting FIND, who will connect interested buyers from the public and private sectors to the manufacturers so that they can procure directly (unrelated to public tender processes).

The announcement follows an open call for partners issued by FIND in May 2020, to limit the impact of diabetes on the severity and outcomes of infection with COVID-19 and other communicable diseases. The colliding burdens of infectious diseases and non-communicable diseases (NCDs) faced in LMICs has been amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic: people with undiagnosed or uncontrolled NCDs, particularly diabetes and cardiovascular diseases, are at higher risk of infection-induced complications and death. This is true not only for COVID-19, but also for tuberculosis and other infectious diseases.[2,3] Diagnosis and successful management of NCDs is critical to reducing the impact of infectious diseases on people with underlying NCDs.

[1] UNICEF. Target product profiles for newborn care in low-resource settings, March 2020. https://www.unicef.org/supply/media/2556/file/TPP-newborn-care-final-report-v1-2.pdf (accessed 8 April 2021)
[2] Erena S. Mol Metab 2020;39:101044. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.molmet.2020.101044
[3] Gautam S et al. Sci Rep 2021;11:2113. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-021-81057-2

In LMICs, people living with diabetes are more prone to diabetes-related complications, in part due to their inability to self-monitor blood glucose levels regularly because of the high cost of blood glucose test strips. Fragmented markets and procurement systems in many LMICs can force healthcare buyers to negotiate prices with suppliers individually, resulting in high prices for end-users.

Increasing the affordability of glucose testing commodities, including blood glucose test strips, is an urgent priority: one in three people with diabetes in LMICs has never had their blood glucose measured.[4]

Emma Hannay, Chief Access Officer at FIND, said: "This year we marked the 100-year anniversary of the discovery of insulin – a ground-breaking milestone that transformed diabetes care for millions of people. Lack of access to glucose test strips in LMICs means people in these countries are not just at risk for the consequences of uncontrolled diabetes, but also increased risk for complications from infectious diseases, a double whammy. Making test strips more affordable is a critical step for people to take control of their health."

Hakhyun Nam, Chief Executive Officer of i-SENS, said: "We are pleased to bring our CareSens® Blood Glucose Monitoring Systems (BGMs) to people with diabetes in low- and middle- income countries through our newly formed partnership with FIND. i-SENS is committed to delivering high-quality BGM products to people with diabetes for the best care. We strongly believe, via this partnership, our CareSens® BGMs could help people manage their diabetes more effectively."

Taeyoung Heo, Chief Executive Officer of SD BIOSENSOR, said: "SD BIOSENSOR is pleased to supply SD CodeFree™ and STANDARD™ GlucoNavii GDH, blood glucose monitoring meters and strips to low-and middle-income countries through this innovative partnership. We are honored to join a partnership that will facilitate access to diabetes testing."

Graham Ogle, General Manager of Life for a Child, said: "We are working with FIND to increase access to blood glucose meters and strips for young people with type 1 diabetes in various LMICs. Provision of these glucose monitoring tools is an essential part of diabetes care, but is typically very challenging for less-resourced health systems. We are optimistic that our collaboration will increase access to all those still in need of quality and affordable glucose monitoring tools."

Sigiriya Aebischer Perone, Non-communicable Diseases Advisor at International Committee of the Red Cross and Senior Resident at Geneva University Hospital, said: "Access to consistent, quality, available and affordable glucose monitoring tools will be a game changer for people living with diabetes in humanitarian settings. Glucose measurement is an integral part of monitoring the condition and empowering patients in self-management in often fragile and disrupted health systems, where continuity and quality care are jeopardized."

For more information or to place orders, please contact NCDs@finddx.org.

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[4] Manne-Goehler J. et al. PLoS Med 2019;16:e1002751. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1002751

About FIND

FIND, the global alliance for diagnostics, seeks to ensure equitable access to reliable diagnosis around the world. We connect countries and communities, funders, decision-makers, healthcare providers and developers to spur diagnostic innovation and make testing an integral part of sustainable, resilient health systems. We are working to save 1 million lives through accessible, quality diagnosis, and save US$1 billion in healthcare costs to patients and health systems. We are co-convener of the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator diagnostics pillar, and a WHO Collaborating Centre for Laboratory Strengthening and Diagnostic Technology Evaluation. For more information, please visit www.finddx.org

Media contact

Sarah-Jane Loveday, Director of Communications
+41 (0) 79 431 62 44
media@finddx.org