Response to COVID-19

Purpose of document

This is a high level briefing describing HFI’s strategy to respond to COVID-19 while continuing to play a leading role in fighting the global underinvestment and significant financing gap for chronic diseases.

HFI’s objective

To become a leading partner for countries, businesses and civil society organizations interested in mitigating the health and economic impact of COVID-19. HFI will do this by aiding countries as well as public and private partners in planning for the COVID-19 recovery phase.

HFI’s focus on COVID-19

- **NCDs and COVID-19 share risk factors**
  Smoking is a well-known risk factor for NCDs and is now emerging as a risk factor for COVID-19 infection. Recent data suggests that current and former smokers are more likely to be infected by COVID-19 are more likely to be hospitalized and experience worse outcomes, as compared to non-smokers.

- **NCDs increase the risk of severe COVID-19 outcomes**
  As the COVID-19 pandemic develops, clinical observations have revealed an association between pre-existing chronic conditions and COVID-19 severity. Based on analysis from CDC data in the United States, COVID-19 patients with chronic conditions are up to 11 times as likely to be hospitalized and up to 14 times as likely to be admitted to the ICU as compared to COVID-19 patients without chronic conditions.

HFI’s COVID-19 response

HFI’s competitive advantage in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic is our expertise in the NCD space and our innovative financing capacities. Given the foreseen global economic recession, it is unknown how governments will invest in COVID-19 recovery strategies. HFI proposes the following medium-term solutions to aid in planning for the COVID-19 recovery phase without disinvesting in other important health interventions.
• **Development of an analytical framework**
  This framework aims to identify NCD risk groups for COVID-19 infection and severe outcomes. It will allow countries to plan/prioritize the disbursement of COVID-19 vaccines and treatment (once available) based on risk-factor analyses.

  **Impact aim:** To reduce negative health outcomes of COVID-19 and subsequent healthcare spending by prioritizing the prevention (and treatment) of COVID-19 in those at highest risk for hospitalization and/or mortality.

• **Forecasting the impact of NCDs on COVID-19**
  As countries develop national COVID-19 response plans, HFI will work to generate epidemiological and economic evidence to advocate for the inclusion of NCD prevention and control interventions. Providing an evidence-based forecast of the potential impact of NCDs on COVID-19 health and economic impacts is essential in planning for the recovery phase of this pandemic.

  **Impact aim:** To advocate for the inclusion of NCDs in national COVID-19 response plans and increase the funding earmarked for NCDs in the COVID-19 recovery phase.

• **Development of innovative financing solutions**
  Using data generated in HFI’s COVID-19 analytical framework and forecasting model, HFI will develop innovative financing mechanisms to aid countries in investing in COVID-19 prevention and control interventions without disinvesting in other important health. These innovative financing solutions will aim to make new capital available for investment in COVID-19 recovery strategies and to protect countries from disinvesting in other important health interventions.

  **Impact aim:** To allow the health system to respond to COVID-19 while protecting it from failing other health issues.

**Contact HFI**

HFI is looking for partners to develop this substantial work. If you are interested please contact Dr. Andrea Feigl at andrea@healthfinanceinstitute.org.

More information on HFI can be found on our [website](https://healthfinanceinstitute.org) and twitter feed [@HealthFinInst](https://twitter.com/HealthFinInst).