



KEI Statement - WHA72

11.5 - Universal Health Coverage

As the World Health Assembly takes up preparations for the high-level meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on universal health coverage, it will have to face the currently untenable high price of many medical technologies, which already breaks the budgets of many Member States' health systems.

In order to have both universal health care and equal access to new medical technologies, governments will have to embrace new approaches to financing biomedical innovation.

Knowledge Ecology International favors delinking the financing of R&D, including the incentives for private investments.

Any method of financing innovation that depends upon a temporary monopoly as the incentive is expensive and features both rationing and an inequality of access.

Whatever approaches governments undertake to finance R&D and achieve UHC, having greater transparency of the economics of biomedical markets and innovation is critically important.

Further, one area where the goal of universal health care is particularly at risk concerns the new cell- and gene-therapies, such as Luxturna, a gene-therapy that can restore vision in people with a specific genetic mutation that causes progressive vision loss, or CAR T treatments for cancer. Access to these very expensive treatments is extremely limited in developing countries, a fact that should be addressed by the WHO.