



R&D (research and development)

R&D covers discovery of a product, and pre-clinical to human trials. Advocates play an important role in R&D, ensuring that trials are designed to answer key questions in different populations, and that study volunteers are not subject to undue risks, and are able to make informed decisions about trial participation. Meaningful, consistent and sustained community engagement in R&D also ensures that products are relevant, acceptable, and trusted, and can increase access and uptake.



Intellectual Property (IP) Barriers

Patents and other IP barriers prevent generic and biosimilar versions of medicines and vaccines from being produced, registered, imported and sold in many countries; even where these products are available—high prices limit access. Advocates have successfully overcome IP barriers, and worked to improve national laws, including patent laws, to facilitate access.



Registration

To enter the market, pharmaceutical companies must register a product with national regulatory authorities (NRAs). This process can take years, especially in (LMIC), where NRAs often function with limited resources.



Adoption and Implementation of Products

To achieve impact, vaccines must be included into national and global guidelines, and countries need the infrastructure to maintain a cold chain for their storage and transport; healthcare workers must be trained, and people need to be offered clear and accurate information about their benefits and risks.

Advocates Role



Supporting the COVAX Facility:

Pressuring governments to join the COVAX Facility (see further description below) to maximize purchasing power and ensure equitable access to safe and effective vaccines as soon as they receive regulatory approval, with a commitment to donate any surplus vaccine doses in their national stockpiles to the Facility.



Calling out vaccine nationalism:

Highlighting the damaging impact of vaccine nationalism on global efforts to end the COVID-19 pandemic as quickly and humanely as possible.



Calling for accountability and transparency on public investments in vaccine R&D:

Demanding greater government and private sector transparency on the use of public funds for R&D, pre-purchase agreements, and advanced market commitments for vaccines and pricing plans.



Advocating for equitable and transparent vaccine pricing:

Ensuring that distribution criteria are ethical and rights-based, with consistent metrics for prioritizing populations for COVID-19 vaccination.



Demanding input from civil society on definitions for fair and equitable vaccine distribution:

Insisting on participatory approaches and transparency to develop context-specific allocation frameworks.



Engaging in planning for vaccine deployment and health system readiness:

Demanding that governments adequately fund vaccination programs and share national deployment plans with the public.