

Community Advocacy and Partnerships in Expanding Cabotegravir Long-Acting (CAB-LA) Access: lessons for innovators, regulatory bodies, donors, and governments

J.W. Mwangi¹, A. Mishra², B.N. Ngwatu³, K. Sikwese¹

¹Afrocab Treatment Access Partnerships, Lusaka, Zambia, ²Dartmouth College, Hanover, United States, ³Clinton Health, Kampala, Uganda
Country of research: Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Eswatini, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Please use the drop down list to indicate if your abstract relates to any of the below
People living with HIV, Other people affected by HIV

Background:

The introduction of cabotegravir long-acting (CAB-LA) is primed to transform prospective HIV prevention and treatment efforts. However, in early 2022 its manufacturer ViiV Healthcare [ViiV] announced they would not pursue a generic license for CAB-LA, a potentially significant impediment to its affordability and access in key geographies in the HIV response. AfroCAB Treatment Access Partnership (AfroCAB), a global network of HIV community leaders sought to address this concern through worldwide advocacy efforts.

Description:

- In March 2022, AfroCAB released a widely cited statement endorsed by almost 200 organizations and individuals globally, demanding rapid pursuit of CAB-LA generic licensing by ViiV.
- ViiV immediately indicated they were now “open” to CAB-LA generic licensing, albeit at a prospective price AfroCAB deemed grossly unaffordable, releasing another statement reiterating these concerns and related demands.
- AfroCAB established a community-led Advocacy Platform to identify national and global actions to facilitate CAB-LA access and convened a gathering of stakeholders from the WHO, Medicines Patent Pool (MPP), the Clinton Health Access Initiative, and global community leaders to outline a path forward in June 2022.
- At the Montreal AIDS 2022 conference, after months of intense advocacy, ViiV and MPP announced a voluntary licensing agreement for CAB-LA.

Lessons Learned

The potential failure of CAB-LA access at a crucial time in the HIV response underscores the need for meaningful community partnerships.

The CAB-LA Advocacy Platform has exemplified this – it collaborated closely with community organizations, implementing partners, innovators, and governments, providing invaluable community-centred inputs to expediently understand, communicate, and rectify early salient barriers to CAB LA entry through coordinated and cohesive decision making and action by all stakeholders, a role that is replicable in the introduction of all future HIV products.

Conclusions/Next steps

With the advent of paradigm-altering HIV products on the horizon, now more than ever, decision-making from manufacturers, donors, and policymakers must prioritize the community’s demands and needs. Establishing, involving, and investing in community partnership models to amplify community interests through dialogue will be critical for future HIV products to quickly reach the communities most in need.

AFROCAB