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The Secretary  
Expert Committee on the Selection and Use of Essential Medicines  
Innovation, Access and Use (IAU)  
Department of Essential Medicines and Health Products  
20 Avenue Appia  
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Dear Committee Members:

On behalf of McGill Global Health Programs, and McGill International TB Centre, we submit this letter in support of the proposal to establish a World Health Organization Model List of Essential in Vitro Diagnostics (EDL).

We are committed to supporting the creation of an EDL. At McGill, we conduct advanced courses on diagnostics, as part of our Summer Institute (http://mcgill-idgh.ca/) and have several researchers working on HIV, TB and NTD diagnostics. We recently helped create a Global Health Diagnostics community at GHDOnline (https://www.ghdonline.org/diagnostics/).

Given our work, we fully appreciate the critical importance of good diagnostic tests, as a key component of health care. Diagnosis is the first key step towards rational use of essential medicines. Yet, diagnostics receive much less attention than vaccines and drugs. Despite recent investments in global health diagnostics, the potential for diagnostics to generate value for patients and health systems has not been met across all settings. This is particularly true in low- and middle-income countries where disease burdens are high and diagnosis remains a critical gap in care cascades.

We believe a WHO EDL will prove invaluable as a guide for countries to establish national EDLs, in the same way that country-level Essential Medicine Lists have been adopted based on the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines (EML). This will improve patient outcomes, reduce antimicrobial resistance, and enhance responses to emerging infectious threats. In addition, by focusing stakeholders (e.g., countries, NGOs, civil society, and funders) on diagnostics, many
logistical problems to implementation can begin to be solved. These include device and laboratory regulation for quality, training of medical technologists, establishment of robust supply chains and courier systems, and affordability (e.g. price control).

In short, establishment of an EDL modeled after the EML would be an important step forward for health care globally. We respectfully urge the committee to approve the proposal at its 21st meeting.

Best regards

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