
Celebrating the centenary of insulin discovery: A week of events to accelerate action on diabetes



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Diabetes is one of the major public health challenges of the 21st century. It is now among the top 10 causes of death worldwide. Despite global commitments to halt the rise of diabetes by 2025, diabetes deaths have increased by 70% since 2000.

Even today, 100 years after the discovery of insulin in 1921, diabetes commonly goes undiagnosed or is only recognised when life-threatening complications develop. For those who receive a diagnosis, access to insulin and essential supplies remains elusive for too many people around the world. However, April 2021 marks the centenary of the discovery of insulin and an opportunity to turn the tide and focus on prevention, timely diagnosis and ensuring access to essential treatment and care for diabetes and its comorbidities.

The [Global Diabetes Summit](#) [1], co-hosted by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Government of Canada, with the University of Toronto, will be held on Wednesday, 14th April 2021 at 5:00 p.m. CEST. The first part of the event will launch [WHO's Global Diabetes Compact](#) [2], a new global initiative to better support the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and long-term care for people living with diabetes. The Compact aims to close knowledge gaps and stimulate innovations to implement technology and leapfrog development for those most vulnerable, including in humanitarian settings. NCD Alliance and many of our members and supporters will speak at the Summit, as supporters of the Global Diabetes Compact.

The Summit will go on to focus on operationalizing meaningful engagement of people living with diabetes and recognise the importance of the discovery under the heading '100 Years of Insulin. Celebrating Its Impact on Our Lives' organized by the University of Toronto. For more information please see [programme](#) [3] and [registration details](#) [4]. You can also check out the live stream of the Summit at www.youtube.com/who [5].

To support this monumental step, NCD Alliance and International Diabetes Federation have come together to co-host a follow-up high-level event titled "[From Promises to Action: Supporting Implementation of the WHO Global Diabetes Compact](#)" [6] on Thursday 15 April 2021 at 06:30 – 8:00 EDT, 12:30 – 14:00 CEST. This online event will see advocates with lived experiences of diabetes, government representatives from Jamaica, Ghana, Jordan and Sri Lanka and thought leaders discuss the opportunities to support the implementation of the WHO Global Diabetes Compact and catalyse access to health care services for people living with diabetes of all ages.

As part of the event, organisations are invited to share their intent to support the implementation of the WHO Global Diabetes Compact. These signals of intent can either be sent via email to gdubois@ncdalliance.org [7] ahead of the event or be shared during the event. NCD Alliance will facilitate the transfer of these statements to the WHO to demonstrate support for the Compact and reinforce its future accountability.

Diabetes is often not a stand-alone condition. It commonly occurs alongside a wide range of other noncommunicable

diseases (NCDs) due to complications or shared risk-factors. COVID-19 has also been a wake-up call for the imperative for integrated health systems. Governments and policymakers can no longer ignore the rights and needs of the increasing number of people living with diabetes who also live with other NCD conditions, such as high blood pressure.

To support governments in this process, NCD Alliance, International Diabetes Federation and the World Heart Federation, will be publishing a policy brief "[Pressure Points: Call for simultaneous action on diabetes, hypertension for more resilient health systems.](#)" [8]. [8]

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- [1] <https://www.who.int/news-room/events/detail/2021/04/14/default-calendar/global-diabetes-summit>
- [2] <http://www.who.int/publications/m/item/introducing-the-global-diabetes-compact>
- [3] <https://deptmedicine.utoronto.ca/event/100-years-insulin-celebrating-its-impact-our-lives>
- [4] <http://www.100yrs-insulin.com/>
- [5] <https://www.youtube.com/who>
- [6] <https://ncdalliance.org/news-events/event/from-promises-to-action-supporting-implementation-of-the-who-global-diabetes-compact>
- [7] <mailto:gdubois@ncdalliance.org>
- [8] <https://ncdalliance.org/resources/pressure-points-call-for-simultaneous-action-on-diabetes-and-hypertension-for-more-resilient-health-systems>
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