From Then to Now:
The Evolution of Antiretroviral Policy and Access

Giten Khwairakpam

November 2025

TREAT Asia, amfAR – The Foundation for AIDS Research

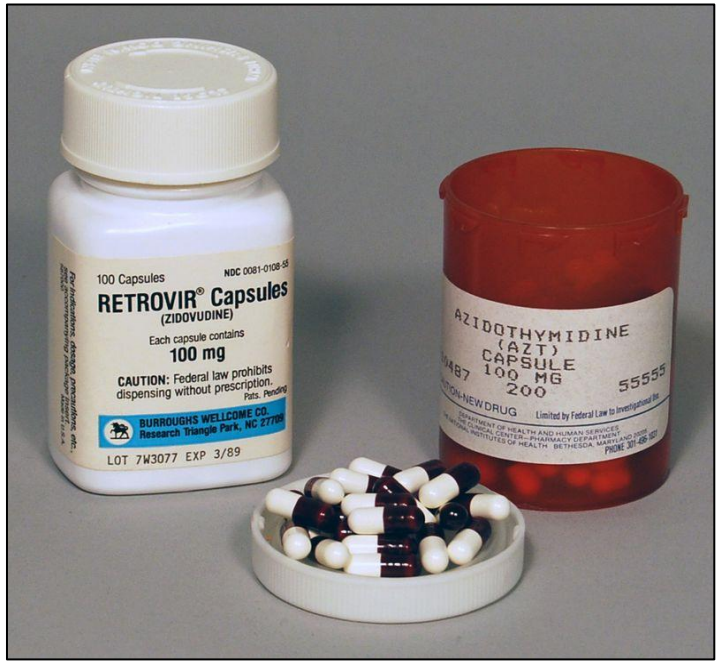
Thailand

TREATASIA amfAR

Antiretrovirals to treat HIV

1987: Zidovudine (azidothymidine; AZT) approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as the first medication to treat HIV

More than $10,000 per person per year and only available in high-income countries



Source: NMAH

TREATASIA amfAR

Antiretrovirals and HIV treatment policy

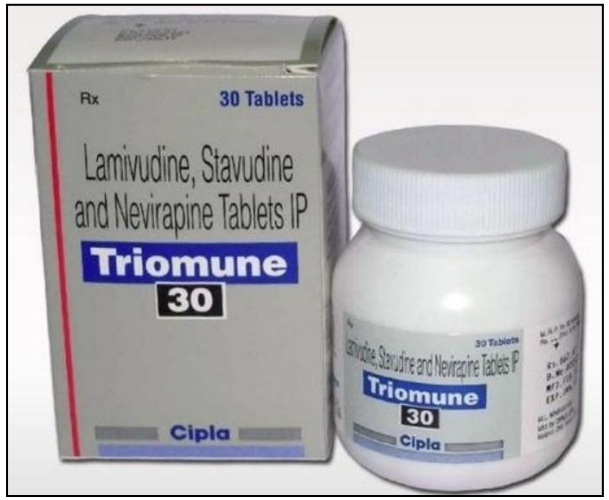
The New York Times

Indian Company Offers to Supply AIDS Drugs at Low Cost in Africa

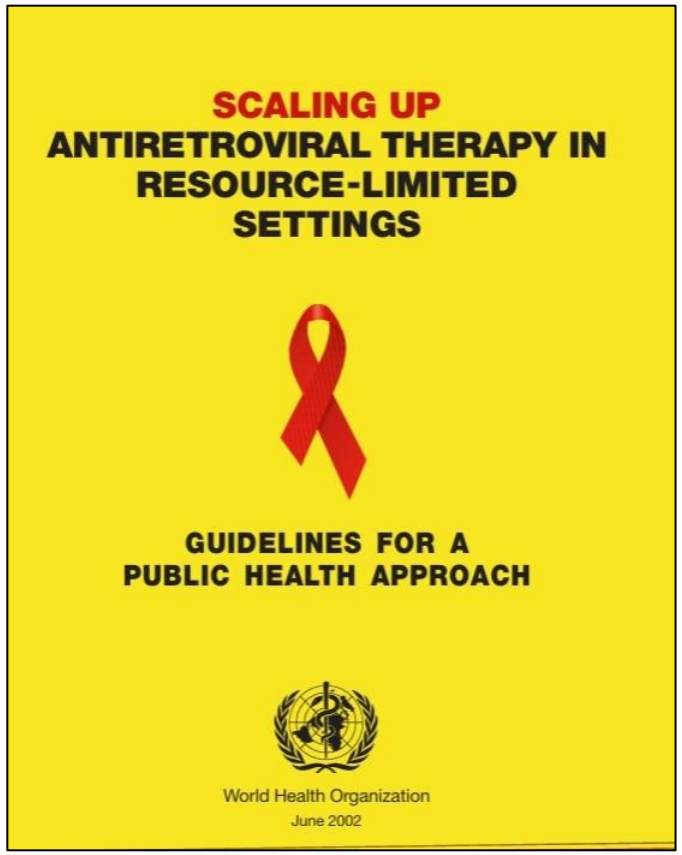
Share full article

By Donald G. McNeil Jr.

Feb. 7, 2001



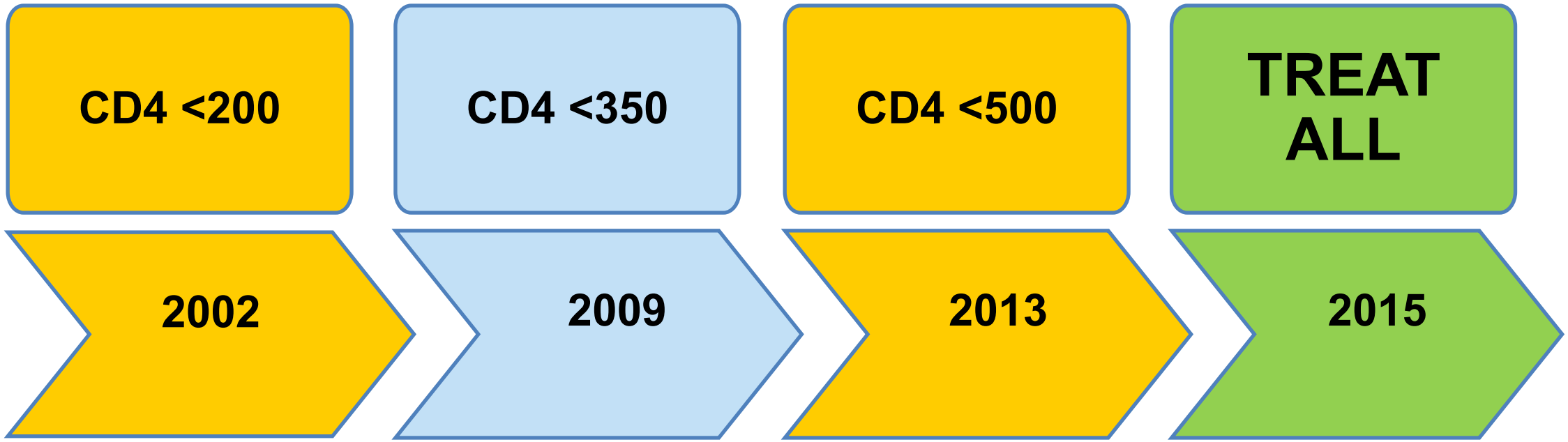
2001: First generic fixed-dose ARV



2002: First WHO HIV treatment guideline

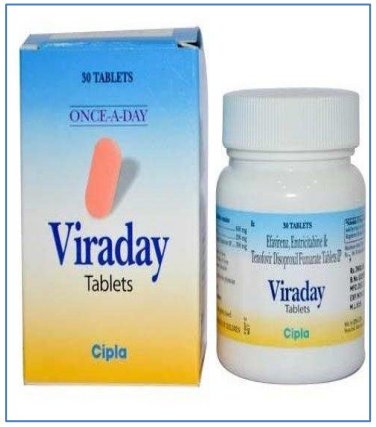
TREATASIA amfAR

WHO policy changes for HIV treatment initiation



TREATASIA amfAR

How far have we come?



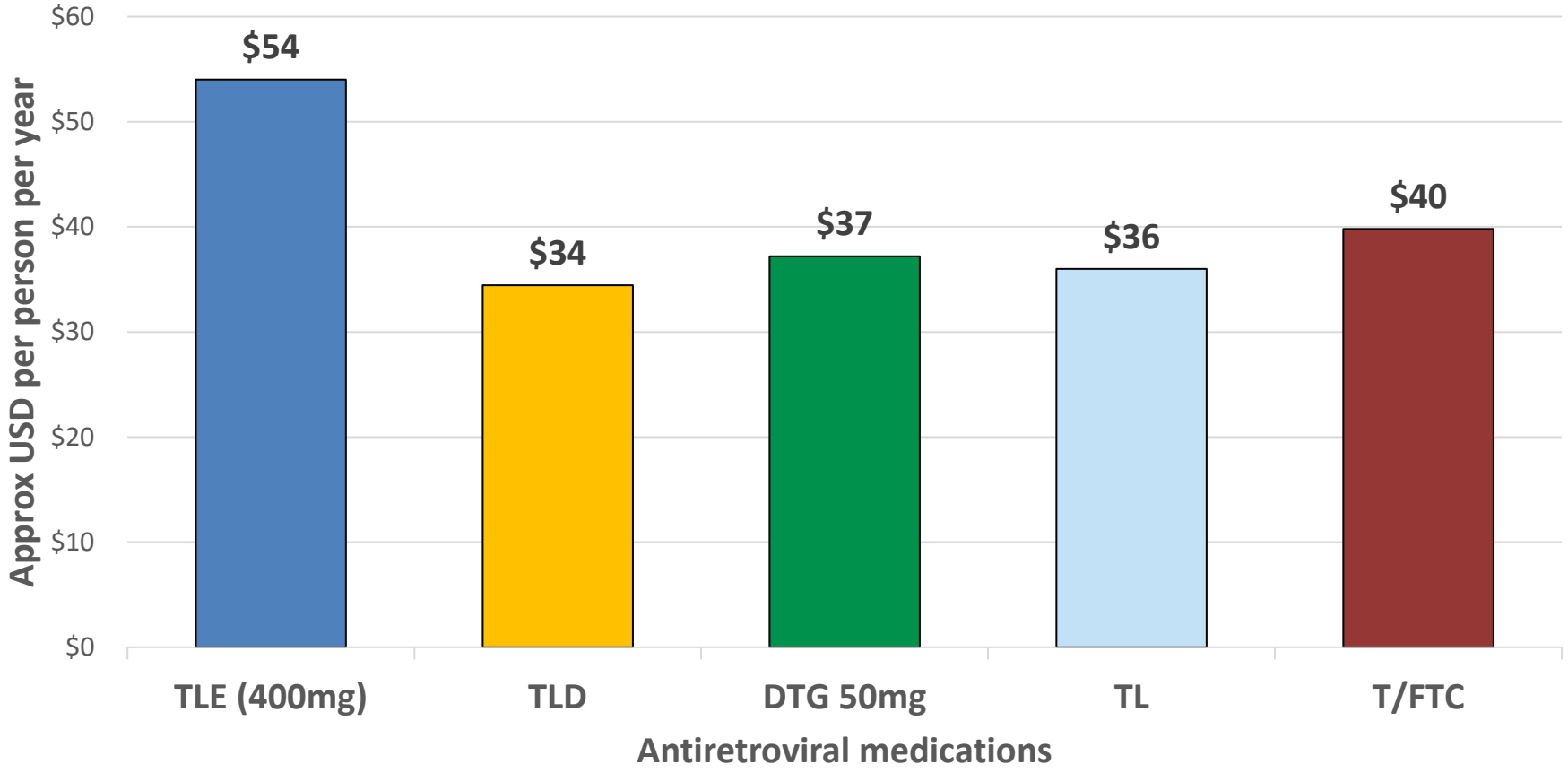
March 2001	Dec 2009	Jan 2010	Jan 2010	Dec 2019
d4T/3TC/NVP 1 USD a day, 350 USD pppy	d4T/3TC/NVP 80 USD pppy	AZT/3TC/NVP 137 USD pppy	TDF/FTC/EFV 219 USD pppy	TDF/3TC/DTG 34 USD pppy*

pppy: per person, per year; *Global Fund procurement

TREATASIA amfAR

Antiretroviral price comparisons

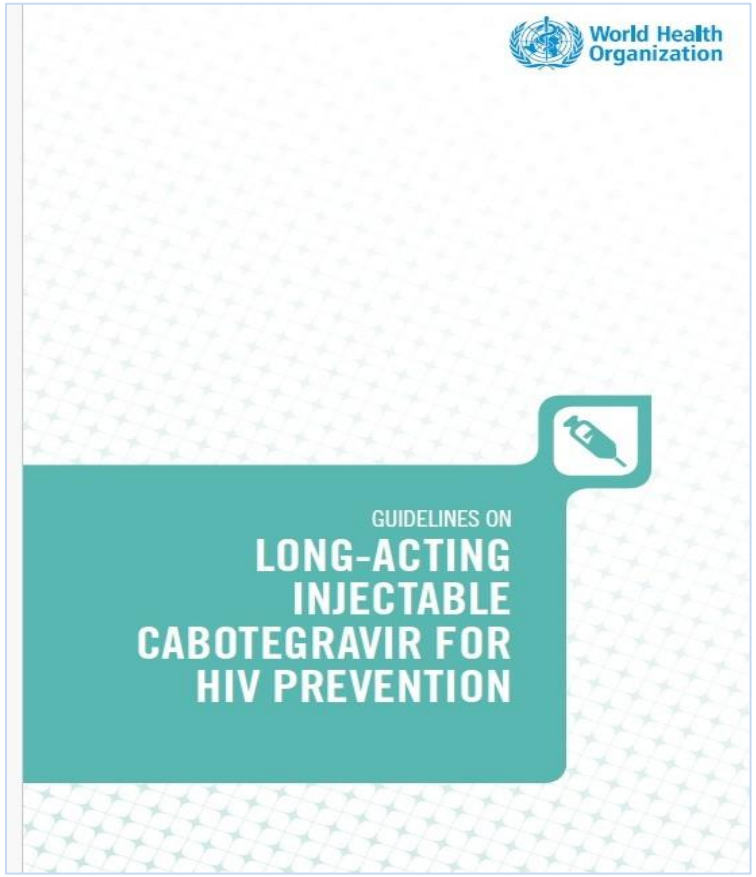
Global Fund pricing, October 2025

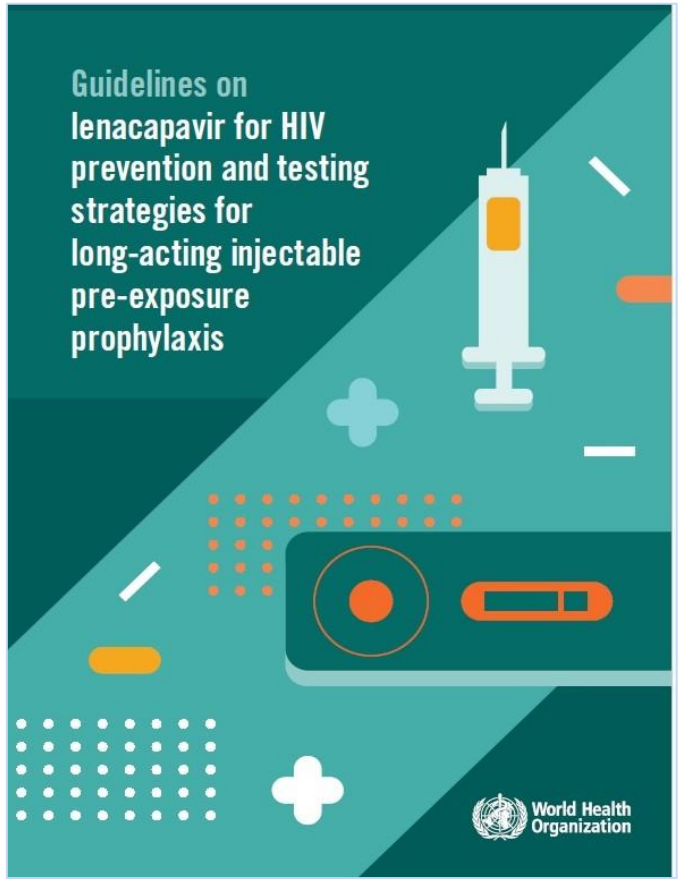


TLE (400mg): Tenofovir/lamivudine/efavirenz 400mg
TLD: Tenofovir/lamivudine/dolutegravir; DTG: Dolutegravir
TL: Tenofovir/lamivudine; T/FTC: Tenofovir/emtricitabine

TREATASIA amfAR

Evolving policy on long-acting antiretrovirals





TREATASIA amfAR

Long-acting antiretrovirals for HIV prevention

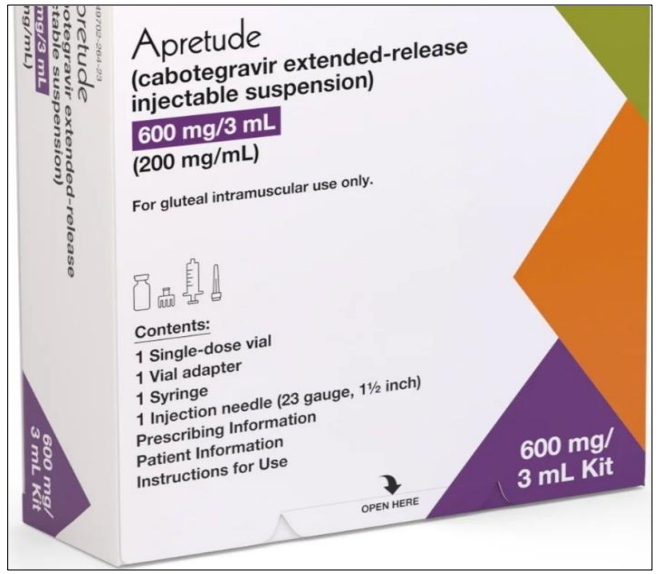
2022: Cabotegravir voluntary license between ViiV Healthcare and the Medicines Patent Pool

- Three Indian sub-licensees (Aurobindo, Cipla, Viatris)

2024: Lenacapavir voluntary license between Gilead and 6 companies

- Four Indian licensees, 1 each from Pakistan and Egypt

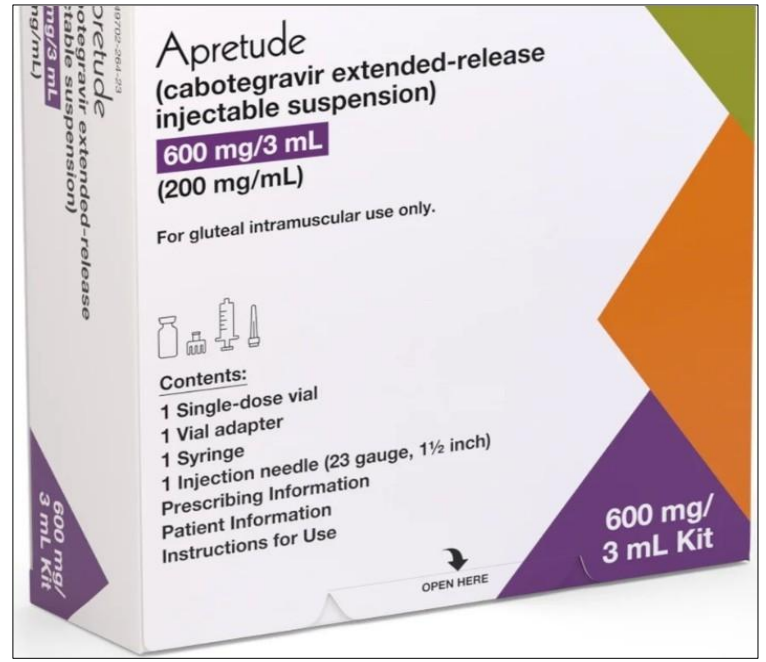
  (Dr. Reddy's, Emcure, Hetero, Mylan, Ferozsons, Eva)



TREATASIA amfAR

Long-acting cabotegravir

Country	Regulatory status
China	Approved (2024)
Malaysia	Approved (2023)
Myanmar	Approved (2024)
Philippines	Approved (2023)
Thailand	Approved (2024)
Vietnam	Dossier submitted and under review
Cambodia	Utilized under Global Fund supported project in Grant Cycle 7



TREATASIA amfAR

Long-acting cabotegravir: Access and pricing

ViiV Healthcare not-for-profit pricing

- Reduced from £24.70 in 2023 to £20.30 per dose in 2025
- Applicable to multi-vial packs (25 doses) procured for public or donor-funded programs in low-income, least-developed countries, and sub-Saharan Africa

Commercial market pricing in Thailand

Dose/Type	Cost (THB)*	Cost (USD)
Oral 1 month	10,200	$316
Injection per dose	14,900	$463
7 injections over one year	104,300	$3239

* May vary depending on clinic

TREATASIA amfAR

Lenacapavir

- Global Fund agreement with Gilead Sciences
  - 9 countries as early adopters for 2 million doses over 3 years
  - US government announced to support access in high HIV burden countries
  - One country from the Asia-Pacific included (Philippines)
- Gilead included Thailand, Philippines and Vietnam as priority countries for product registration
- Indian generic companies committed $40 per person per year
  - Registration dossier filed
- Upper-middle-income countries e.g. Malaysia excluded from voluntary license

TREATASIA amfAR

Summary

- Antiretroviral medicines have evolved, so has policies
- Costs of antiretrovirals are falling and policies becoming more inclusive
- Long-acting technology offers a critical opportunity to control new infections
- Asia-Pacific largely absent in both policy uptake and implementation of long-acting technology
- Commercial market pricing is expensive and inaccessible in the absence of public programs

Future considerations

- Access to quality assured, affordable generic long-acting products essential
- Support to advocating for regulatory approval in India critical to access in other countries
- Advocate for:
  - Updating of national HIV policies to include long-acting technology
  - Fast tracking registration of long-acting products from innovator and generics
- More products like MK-8527 in pipeline- ***How can we be more prepared?***
- ***Let's also not forget*** 33% of people living with HIV are not accessing treatment in Asia –Pacific. ***Will long-acting technology be an answer to fill the gap?***

TREATASIA amfAR