

# Talking to: Patrice Matchaba, Global Head of Corporate Responsibility for Novartis

Dr. Matchaba describes how his unique background can help guide the company's access-to-medicine efforts.

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On October 1, Patrice Matchaba, M.D., became the new Global Head of Corporate Responsibility (CR) for Novartis, succeeding Juergen Brokatzky-Geiger, who is retiring from the company. Dr. Matchaba joined Novartis in 2000, leading specialized areas in clinical development based in the US. During the past 17 years, he has held roles of increasing responsibility in Global Drug Development and was most recently Global Head of the Cardio-Metabolic development unit. We sat down with him to discuss his new role as Global Head of CR.

## **After a career in drug development, why did you decide to make this move? What drew you to corporate responsibility?**

Matchaba: For close to 17 years, I have had the privilege to work and lead teams in almost every function within Global Drug Development at Novartis. I am a passionate advocate of corporate responsibility, and I will bring my extensive professional and clinical experience to the role. I am also an African by birth, and prior to joining Novartis, I practiced as a medical doctor and scientific researcher in South Africa – so I have firsthand knowledge about the issues and challenges, as well as the impact our corporate responsibility activities can have.

## **Can you cite any specific experiences that brought this to life for you?**

Matchaba: We recently launched our heart failure medicine for patients with heart failure around the world. It is a truly humbling experience – this is the first drug of its kind in two decades, and we made significant investments (both in people and finances) to make it commercially available.

But even with all that effort and investment, I realized that using our current business models, we would be reaching a million or so people with heart failure – while there are close to 60 million around the world. This really struck me and convinced me that we need to be doing more to develop innovative access models that are sustainable and ensure more – if not all – patients who really need our medicines can get them when they need them.

With that in mind, leading our CR team is the opportunity of a lifetime. We have the chance to bring together our enormous power and resources in innovation to help deliver on our mission of improving and extending lives for as many people as possible. Moving from drug development to working on sustainable global access models was a challenge I couldn't pass up.

## **What unique perspective/experience/ideas will you bring to the role?**

Matchaba: I believe the combination of my drug development experience and my African heritage will be very valuable as we build on the tremendous foundation set by Juergen Brokatzky-Geiger and his team. As we craft

new access strategies, I can share my own personal observations and experiences about the gaps in healthcare infrastructure and capabilities that exist in developing countries.

I think we can't lose sight of the fact that access in developing countries is not simply about a lack of innovative medicines. Rather, it's about the whole ecosystem required to deliver healthcare products and monitor their impact. That's why we are looking for ways to further embed access strategies in our day-to-day business. We saw the impact this made in the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and from our own team's huge success with the Novartis Malaria Initiative.

Leading our CR team is the opportunity of a lifetime. We have the chance to bring together our enormous power and resources in innovation to help deliver on our mission of improving and extending lives for as many global patients as possible.

**Patrice Matchaba**, Global Head of CR for Novartis

## **What do you believe are the key CR challenges facing Novartis?**

Matchaba: A lot of progress has been made under Juergen and his team. Our job now is to build on this strong foundation. As I mentioned, we will be focusing on making access to our medicines an integral part of how we do business at Novartis.

Eliminating diseases is still one of our areas of focus. With our long-running programs in malaria and leprosy – and the new medicines in development for malaria in particular – we have an opportunity to start thinking about wiping out some of these ancient diseases. I believe this is realistic in the hands of a company like ours that has bent the disease burden curves in transplantation, heart failure, cancer, psoriasis, hypertension and cancer, changing medical practice around the world forever.

Of course, there is also an epidemic of noncommunicable and chronic diseases that is affecting people around the world. In developing countries, this has already become a bigger burden than infectious diseases. To help, Novartis must integrate global access and adaptive drug development so it becomes part of our normal development process. Given that we have one of the most attractive pipelines in the industry, I am convinced that if any company can do this, it's us.

How we work is just as important as what we do. That means continuing a lot of the great work already underway: strengthening our culture of integrity, minimizing the environmental impact of our activities, and being open and transparent about how we operate. That's how we can build trust with all our stakeholders and customers, as well as the societies we all live in and call home.

Our new Global Head of CR brings personal experience to our #accesstomedicines efforts.

## **Learn more about corporate responsibility at Novartis**

We apply our expertise in science and innovation to society's biggest health challenges. Responsibility is a core part of our business strategy.

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