



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MONDAY, 24 SEPTEMBER, 2012

Health innovator Dr Sania Nishtar created Clinton Global Initiative Commitment to Action at 2012 Annual Meeting

A new Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) Commitment which uses mHealth to address the global epidemic being caused by the world's number one killer, Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), has been announced today (24 September, 2012) at the 2012 CGI Annual Meeting.

Established in 2005 by President Bill Clinton, CGI convenes a community of global leaders to forge solutions to the world's most pressing challenges. Over 1,000 leaders are present at this year's eighth Annual CGI Meeting in New York, themed 'Designing for Impact.'

The innovative social protection system, Heartfile Health Financing (HHF) incorporates mHealth, technology and process innovation. It is the brainchild of Dr Sania Nishtar, Founder and President of Heartfile, the umbrella organisation for HHF and Pakistan's top health NGO think tank.

Through this CGI commitment, HHF will plan an up-scaling of the existing programme to new regions in Pakistan helping 2,000 additional patients/families and 14,000 individuals.

HHF is a demand-side health financing system which enables registered hospitals to seek financial help for poor patients in an expedient and transparent manner.

The system has three components – a mhealth-enabled technology interface, a fund, and a system of ascertaining eligibility and priority. The system can be alerted by a simple SMS on a mobile telephone. After a quick two-step validation process, including verification of the patient's unique identification number on the national database, money is then released and treatment can begin within days not months – saving lives.

Through the technology, donors can earmark and track their donations, and receive real-time updates on the individual patients they are supporting.

Nearly a quarter of the world's population risks spending catastrophically on health care, being pushed into poverty, becoming indebted, or simply foregoing care. NCDs are the main culprit in relation to health impoverishment. HHF has been functioning for more than two years during which over US \$350,000 have been disbursed to more than 1,000 patients in Pakistan.

The new commitment also reflects HHF's partnership with the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF), Partners for a New Beginning (PNB) and a CGI-enabled partnership with Management Sciences for Health (MSH), an international non-profit organisation with experience in strengthening health systems in 40 countries. Through these collaborations, HHF will address problems in conflict-ridden regions of Pakistan via its mHealth programme and mobile-based financing.

The possibility of scale up is also being explored in other countries with similar needs. Initial steps are being taken towards replicating the program in African countries, where help is critical for the poorest of the poor, and where opportunities offered by technology and the penetration of mobile phones have remained untapped.

Notes to editors

- **Dr Sania Nishtar**
Dr Sania Nishtar is a global health expert and a major proponent of health reform. She is founder of Pakistan's top health NGO think tank, Heartfile, Pakistan's Health Policy Forum and the award winning, Heartfile Health Financing. Dr Nishtar is the author of Pakistan's first health reform plan, the country's first compendium of health statistics, and its first national plan for NCDs. She sits on numerous international boards and advisory groups, has published over 200 journal articles and op-eds and is the author of six books. She is the recipient of many national and international awards, including most recently the Global Innovation Award. Sania holds a Fellowship of the Royal College of Physicians of London and a Ph.D from Kings College. For more information, visit <http://www.sanianishtar.info/>
- **Heartfile**
Heartfile is a non-profit health sector NGO think tank, which focuses on catalyzing change within the health system and broader systems of governance in order to improve health and social outcomes; the organization is recognized as a powerful and respected health policy voice within Pakistan. For more information, visit <http://www.heartfile.org/>
- **Heartfile Health Financing (HHF)**
Heartfile Health Financing is an innovative mHealth-enabled health financing program, aimed at protecting the poor from catastrophic expenditures on healthcare. The programme provides unparalleled transparency and efficiency and is being steadily up-scaled in Pakistan. For more information, visit <http://www.heartfilefinancing.org/> and follow us on Twitter [@HeartfileTweets](https://twitter.com/HeartfileTweets) and Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/Heartfile>.
- **Clinton Global Initiative (CGI)**
Established in 2005 by President Bill Clinton, the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) convenes global leaders to create and implement innovative solutions to the world's most pressing challenges. CGI Annual Meetings have brought together more than 150 heads of state, 20 Nobel Prize laureates, and hundreds of leading CEOs, heads of foundations and NGOs, major philanthropists, and members of the media. To date, CGI members have made more than 2,100 commitments, which are already improving the lives of nearly 400 million people in more than

180 countries. When fully funded and implemented, these commitments will be valued at \$69.2 billion.

CGI's Annual Meeting is held each September in New York City. CGI also convenes CGI America, a meeting focused on collaborative solutions to economic recovery in the United States, and CGI University (CGI U), which brings together undergraduate and graduate students to address pressing challenges in their community or around the world. For more information, visit clintonglobalinitiative.org and follow updates on Twitter [@ClintonGlobal](https://twitter.com/ClintonGlobal) and Facebook at facebook.com/clintonglobalinitiative.

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