

# MSD's commitment to working with patient communities



Today, more patients are becoming active and engaged in their health care than ever before. As patient communities are vital to our work now and in the future, this document outlines our commitment to responsible and ethical work with them. By “patient communities,” we mean individual patients, their caregivers and family members, patient advocacy leaders and patient organizations.

## Our position on working with patient communities

Our company's goal is to make our medicines and vaccines available to people so they can live longer, healthier lives. We focus on improving access and affordability because we believe no one should go without the medicines or vaccines they need.

It is critical that we understand, respect and honor the life experiences of patient communities. A central part of our work is engaging with and actively listening to patient communities at every opportunity possible. They share their health care journeys with us so we can:

- Understand their perspectives and insights
- Learn how we can better help them
- Ask for guidance and consult with them on issues that directly affect them
- Take their views and opinions into account in our company strategy and all that we do, from the [very early stages of research to the time that a medicine is widely available](#).

We know that no one ever wants to be a patient. But for those who become patients, you can expect us to work as hard as we can to be there when you need us. We will continue supporting patient communities to become their own health advocates, make informed decisions, and be equal partners in engaging with the health care system.



## Our core principles

In our interactions with patient communities, we are guided by these principles:

- **Human connection:** We strive for our interactions with patient communities to be “human” – in other words, [health literate](#), [uncomplicated](#) (clear), [meaningful](#), [authentic](#) and [natural](#).
- **Commitment to health equity:** We are actively working to reduce health inequities, as we believe everyone should have the same chance to be as healthy as possible. This means seeking more chances to work with people who have not had the same opportunities to access health care and medicines, and those with greater need.
- **Ethics and integrity:** We follow applicable laws, regulations and ethical codes in the regions and countries where we operate.<sup>i</sup>
- **Independence:** The independence of patient communities, especially patient organizations, is of utmost importance. We support patient communities and respect their need for autonomy, transparency and fairness.
- **Purpose and transparency:** We want our work with patient communities to have meaning and purpose. To that end, we are open and transparent and know that patient communities uphold and value these same principles.



“The relationship between a pharmaceutical company and a patient organization should not be a comfortable one. We should be challenging each other, holding each other accountable.”

-a representative from a European patient organization

“We believe that it is essential that we work in partnership to achieve better outcomes for our patients. MSD has always been both highly ethical and very supportive in our relationship. Most importantly, they have always been genuinely prepared to listen and learn.”

-a representative from an Australian patient organization

## Examples of our work with patient communities

Our dedicated team of professionals work with patient communities around the world. By working together, we can help create better outcomes for patients.

- **The patient voice - In the U.S.:**
  - › We created a patient advocacy connection webinar series, which brings together patient advocacy leaders, company leaders and others to discuss topics that are important to patients
  - › We bring together diverse groups of patients – all who have experience living with diseases, representing the patient voice and giving ongoing, thoughtful input that we can apply to our business and research decisions
- **Input into our research:**
  - › For example, when we design a clinical trial (a type of research study), we find it helpful to meet with diverse groups of patient communities to learn how a health condition affects their daily lives. We can then consider their views in the clinical trial design
- **Health equity:**
  - › In Europe, we helped bring together a group of organizations representing some of the most underserved communities so that they have a single voice regarding their right to health care
  - › In the U.S., we are a co-sponsor of a program that strives to get more diverse representation in cancer clinical trials
- **Capacity building:**
  - › In Latin America, we helped launch a regional project to help local patient organizations better advocate for policy changes
  - › We worked with a cancer patient organization in Australia to help expand patient advocacy capabilities in other countries in the Asia Pacific region
- **Disease awareness:**
  - › In the Middle East, we helped form a community of young cancer patients, and supported their work in developing a guide for medical staff to better understand their needs



“We put patients at the center of everything we do. We believe that patient perspectives help us innovate and improve health outcomes, and we embrace every opportunity to engage with patients and caregivers to inform how we can best serve their needs.”

Rob Davis, CEO and president

To learn more about our commitment to patients, visit [www.msd.com/patients](http://www.msd.com/patients).

<sup>i</sup> International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations (IFPMA), Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA), European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA) and Latin American Federation of the Pharmaceutical Industry (FIFARMA)