

Traveling Nine Thousand Miles to Help End Trachoma

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Antibiotics are a key component in the global effort to eliminate trachoma, the world's leading infectious cause of blindness. One of several neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) the World Health Organization (WHO) has identified for elimination, trachoma is a preventable disease, and one that affects those living in communities with limited access to healthcare, clean water and sanitation.

Pfizer is proud to contribute to trachoma elimination efforts through the donation of an antibiotic used to treat trachoma, and recently extended its donation until 2025, should it be needed. Pfizer donates the antibiotic to the International Trachoma Initiative (ITI), a program of the Taskforce for Global Health, an independent not-for-profit organization. The antibiotic is used to help clear trachoma infection, help prevent the spread of the disease within a community and stop the disease from progressing to the stage where it can cause blindness. Antibiotic administration is part of the WHO's SAFE strategy, which stands for:

- **S**urgery for people at risk for blindness
- **A**ntibiotics to treat the disease
- **F**acial cleanliness and
- **E**nvironmental improvements, including increased access to clean water and sanitation to reduce transmission

Pfizer's manufacturing plants in Puerto Rico assist in the production and packaging of the antibiotic for donation to the International Trachoma Initiative. Although the island of Puerto Rico was badly damaged after Hurricane Maria September 2017, our Pfizer colleagues in Puerto Rico were steadfast in their efforts to return to normal operation. We thank them for their unwavering support and meaningful role in continuing our collective efforts to eliminate trachoma.

“Every role counts,” notes Ramon Frontanes, Site Leader, Pfizer Puerto Rico. “Everyone is here for a particular reason. We need everyone engaged to get the outcome that we are committing to.”

Through the International Trachoma Initiative, Pfizer has donated nearly one billion antibiotic doses that can travel more than 9,000 miles at times to reach the hands of local health workers for distribution. This long journey would not be possible without the contributions of Pfizer colleagues, like our Puerto Rico team, and a vast network of committed partners at the international, national and local levels.

“Pfizer’s commitment to providing the drugs necessary for the mass distribution of antibiotics for trachoma control has galvanized the community,” says Dr. Paul Emerson, director, International Trachoma Initiative.

“I saw a lot of communities that had trachoma last year, and the trachoma has disappeared after one round of mass treatment,” notes Dr. Khumbo Kalua, director, Blantyre Institute for Community Ophthalmology in Malawi. “This is tremendous. This is a real public health innovation.”

Watch the video below to learn more about the journey of our antibiotic used to help eliminate trachoma, and the global network of people that makes it all possible.

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