



International Community of Women Living with HIV Eastern Africa (ICWEA)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ICWEA Welcomes ViiV Healthcare’s Expansion of Voluntary License to Include Long-Acting Injectable HIV Treatment.

Kampala, Uganda | 18 July 2025 — The International Community of Women Living with HIV Eastern Africa (ICWEA) warmly welcomes the announcement by ViiV Healthcare and the Medicines Patent Pool (MPP) to expand their voluntary licensing agreement to include patents for long-acting injectable cabotegravir (CAB LA) for HIV treatment. This move is a significant step forward for equitable access to transformative HIV technologies, especially for women and adolescent girls in Sub-Saharan Africa.

This new agreement now allows existing generic manufacturers to develop, produce, and distribute CAB LA—used in combination with long-acting rilpivirine—for HIV treatment in 133 countries. These include all least-developed, low-income, and lower-middle-income countries, as well as Sub-Saharan Africa. The expanded license builds on the existing PrEP license and aligns with the latest WHO recommendation supporting long-acting injectables as a treatment option for people living with HIV who are virologically suppressed but face adherence challenges.

ICWEA, a long-time advocate for access to innovative HIV treatments including CAB LA, recognizes this development as a win for communities and a step toward health justice. For many women, especially those facing stigma, intimate partner violence, or structural barriers that make daily oral regimens difficult to maintain, a long-acting injectable offers dignity, privacy, and autonomy.

“We have long advocated for HIV treatment and prevention that meet the realities of women’s lives. Long-acting injectables for both prevention and treatment are not just scientific innovations—they are tools for liberation and control over our health,” said Brenda Facy Azizuyo, Programs Officer at ICWEA. ***“This expanded license is a response to our collective voice. Now we call on governments, donors, and communities to ensure rollout is fast and responsive.”***

The agreement underscores the importance of community engagement and public-private partnerships in removing structural and market barriers to access. With this progress, ICWEA urges all stakeholders to:

- Fast-track regulatory approvals in eligible countries;

- Ensure affordability and integration into national HIV programs;
- Center women and girls in decision-making around rollout and implementation;
- Continue investing in capacity building for community-led demand generation and monitoring.

As a feminist regional movement of women living with HIV, ICWEA will continue to work with partners, to monitor equitable access, push for community-led scale-up, and ensure that no woman or girl is left behind.

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About ICWEA

The International Community of Women Living with HIV Eastern Africa (ICWEA) is a regional women-led advocacy network established in 2005 to amplify the voices and address the unique needs of women living with HIV. Operating across Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Burundi. ICWEA has emerged as a leader in HIV and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) advocacy, community engagement, and accountability in health systems. ICWEA strives to create a feminist movement that bridges the gaps in gender equality, sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and ending violence against women and girls (VAWG).

Our approach focuses on capacity building, advocacy, and community empowerment, ensuring that women living with HIV are at the forefront of shaping the policies, services, and interventions that affect their lives. We work through strategic partnerships with civil society organizations, governments, donors, and international institutions to ensure systemic changes that strengthen women's participation in all aspects of life, from decision-making to service provision.

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