



**SIGMA**

PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRIES

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The Secretary of the 17th Expert Committee on the Selection and Use of Essential Medicines  
Medicine Access and Rational Use (MAR)  
Department of Essential Medicines and Pharmaceutical Policies (EMP)  
World Health Organization  
20 Avenue Appia  
CH-1211 Geneva 27  
Switzerland

Date, November 4, 2008

Dear Committee Members:

This letter is in support of the application for misoprostol to be added to WHO's Essential Medicines List (EML) for the prevention of postpartum hemorrhage submitted on behalf of Venture Strategies for Health and Development and Gynuity Health Projects. Maternal mortality continues to be a pressing public health issue, particularly in developing countries. Despite effective means of prevention and treatment, postpartum hemorrhage (PPH) remains one of the largest contributors to maternal morbidity and mortality in low-resource settings and accounts for nearly one quarter of all maternal deaths worldwide. To date progress towards meeting the fifth Millennium Development Goal of reducing the maternal mortality ratio by two thirds between 1990 and 2015 has been disappointing. The addition of misoprostol to the EML as means of preventing PPH is the only plausible step that the international community can take towards tackling the heavy burden of PPH in deliveries globally, and especially in low-resource settings where the maternal mortality is the highest.

As a WHO Good Manufacturing Practices approved manufacturer of misoprostol, we are committed to keeping the cost of misoprostol to the consumer as low as possible. Assuring the low cost of the drug through its inclusion on the WHO EML will aid in increasing access to misoprostol for the hardest to reach populations. Additionally, we can and will utilize our existing distribution networks to reach the many women who currently deliver without an effective means of controlling PPH.

The absence of misoprostol from the WHO EML makes it difficult for Ministries of Health to include misoprostol in their countries Essential Drugs List. Similarly, UN agencies and organizations active in emergency situations are frequently unable to offer this medication because of its absence from the WHO EML. In order to increase access, reduce costs, and save maternal lives, we support the inclusion of misoprostol on the WHO EML for the prevention of PPH.

Thank you for considering the addition of this very important medication to the WHO EML for the prevention of postpartum hemorrhage.

Sincerely,  
Atef D. Deraz  
Deputy Chairman



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