Expanding affordable access to diabetes medicines in Uganda

A 69% price reduction for glimepiride 4mg through strategic market shaping

November 2026: Uganda Ministry of Health · National Medical Stores · CHAI · Supported by The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust

293,435	UGX 2.64B	UGX 5.87B
Treatment packs planned, FY26/27	Total anticipated spend, FY26/27	Cost avoided vs. previous price[1]

Background and the challenge

The policy context:

- The 2023 Uganda Clinical Guidelines designated glimepiride 4mg as the sole second-line treatment for type 2 diabetes at the primary health care (PHC) level
- Glibenclamide was phased out due to weight gain and hypoglycemia risks
- A growing noncommunicable disease (NCD) burden is also driving exponential demand, from 3,600 packs (FY23/24) to 66,186 packs (FY25/26): a 1,738% surge in just two years

The affordability crisis:

- Facilities were accessing glimepiride at UGX 29,000 per pack, a critical affordability barrier for PHC facilities
- Facility credit lines spent about UGX 1.92 billion in FY25/26 on 66,186 packs at UGX 29,000 each (NMS procurement price: UGX 27,000)[2]
- Health facility budgets were unable to sustain growing patient volumes at existing prices, threatening continuity of care

The collaborative solution

Addressing this challenge required coordinated action across the medicine supply chain. The Ministry of Health (NCD Department), National Medical Stores, and CHAI, with support from the Helmsley Charitable Trust, worked in partnership, each contributing their unique mandate and expertise to reshape the market and make treatment sustainably affordable.

Ministry of Health NCD Department and DPNM	*Policy stewardship*	Revised Uganda Clinical Guidelines establishing glimepiride as standard of care; inclusion in the Essential Medicines List; policy framework enabling affordable procurement.
National Medical Stores (NMS)	*Needs assessment, procurement & distribution*	Established the need for an access price for glimepiride to benchmark negotiations with suppliers; consolidated national demand projections to achieve MOQ requirements (50,000+ packs); established a framework contract with a local supplier; overseeing last-mile distribution to health facilities nationwide.
CHAI Uganda & CHAI Global Markets Team	*Market shaping & facilitation*	Provided technical assistance on access pricing for a stringent regulatory authority (SRA)-approved glimepiride product to ensure long-term contracting for supply security; identified a local supplier of the quality-assured product to ensure Buy Uganda Build Uganda (BUBU) compliance.

[1] FY26/27 planned packs (293,435) × UGX 20,000 difference between the previous and new facility price.
[2] Two price layers: the NMS procurement price is what NMS pays the supplier (UGX 27,000 previously; UGX 8,370 now). The facility price is what NMS charges against each health facility's credit line when it issues the medicine (UGX 29,000 previously; UGX 9,000 now). The two are a fixed margin apart. All spend and savings figures in this brief use facility prices, consistent with the FY2026/27 national quantification.

Price reduction and financial impact

69%	343%	38%
Price reduction for FY26/27, saving UGX 20,000 per patient/month	More treatment planned for FY26/27, treating ~24,500 people for one year[3]	Larger budget spend: UGX 2.64B

With a 38 percent larger budget, Uganda's health system can now provide 4.4 times as much treatment (an additional 227,249 packs), equivalent to about 24,500 people treated for a full year—up from about 5,500—a direct result of strategic market shaping.

Multi-level impact

Patient impact:

- 293,435 packs of affordable treatment planned in FY26/27, up from 66,186 in FY25/26
- 227,249 additional packs of treatment as a direct result of the price reduction
- UGX 240,000 lower annual cost per patient on facility budgets
- Treatment is now 3x more affordable for facilities, which provide it to patients free of charge

Health system impact:

- UGX 5.87 billion in costs avoided compared with buying FY26/27 volumes at the previous price
- Planned spend of UGX 2.64B for 293,435 vs. UGX 1.92B for 66,186 previously: 38% more spend for 4.4x the treatment
- Supply security established via a long-term framework contract with a local supplier.
- Facilities can now plan sustainable type 2 diabetes treatment programs without budget shock

Policy and systems impact:

- Full alignment with Uganda's Buy Uganda Build Uganda (BUBU) policy through a local supplier
- SRA-approved product guaranteeing consistent medicine quality across all facilities
- Establishes a replicable model for NCD medicine market shaping in Uganda and the region
- Demonstrates the value of the MoH, NMS, and CHAI partnership, supported by the Helmsley Charitable Trust, for sustainable health outcomes

Implementation roadmap

Completed	Framework contract secured: NMS established a procurement agreement at negotiated pricing.
October 2026	New price reaching facilities: An NMS report released in October 2026 confirms health facilities are receiving glimepiride at the new UGX 9,000 price.
FY 2026/27	Full implementation: NMS is procuring 293,435 packs at the new price, providing more patients, months of treatment than the prior year for 38% more spend.
Ongoing	Monitoring and accountability: Continuous tracking of national procurement volumes and subnational availability by all partners to ensure full patient benefit at every facility.

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NMS MEDICAL LOGISTICS

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Sources: FY2026/27 National Annual Needs Analysis and Quantification Report for EMHS (NMS and Ministry of Health, October 2026)

[3] One pack (30 tablets of glimepiride 4mg) equals one month of treatment for one patient.