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## **OECD countries agree Guidelines on licensing of healthcare genetics**

OECD member countries have adopted an agreed set of Guidelines for the Licensing of Genetic Inventions used in healthcare, in a move designed to help people benefit more widely from advances in genetics while making research and innovation faster and more efficient.

The Guidelines respond to some of the concerns of governments, patient groups and industry that patenting of genetic inventions and restrictive licensing of their use is reducing access to the benefits of the technology and discouraging new research.

By setting out principles and best practices for businesses, researchers and health systems that enter into license agreements for genetic inventions, the Guidelines aim to encourage broad licensing and timely dissemination of biotechnological innovation.

Advances in medical genetics promise faster, better, diagnosis as well as a new generation of targeted therapies that promise significant gains in health. Major applications of genetic inventions include diagnostic tests for certain types of cancer and for genetic diseases such as cystic fibrosis and Huntington's Disease, as well as therapies to treat diseases with a proven genetic component, including many metabolic diseases and types of cancer.

The OECD Guidelines were developed by a broad group of experts from diverse backgrounds and were subject to wide public consultation prior to adoption. Though they are not legally binding, but they represent an important political and moral commitment on the part of OECD countries. Governments have agreed to report back in four years time on progress in their diffusion and implementation.

The full text of the Guidelines and additional information is available on the OECD web site at: [www.oecd.org/sti/biotechnology/licensing](http://www.oecd.org/sti/biotechnology/licensing). For further information, journalists are invited to contact Christina Sampogna in the biotechnology unit of the OECD's Directorate for Science and Technology (<mailto:Christina.Sampogna@oecd.org> or tel. + 331 45 24 98 21).

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