

# *Pharmaceutical Group Makes Decisive Contribution to Health of Cubans*

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By Nuria Barbosa León

The Biocubafarma Enterprise Group makes a decisive contribution to the health of the Cuban people, developing patented strategies, technologies, products and equipment for timely detection, diagnosis and treatment of various illnesses.

Responsible for manufacturing 525 of the 849 essential medications which make up the country's *basic catalog of medicines*, this Central Organization of Enterprise Management contributed to national healthcare programs linked to immunization, large-scale research into infectious and non-infectious diseases, efforts to tackle diabetes and its associated conditions, the fight against cancer with the use of modern Cuban developed products and catalogue of essential medicines used by the National Public Health System, among others.

Founded on December 7, 2012 under Law no.307 of the Council of Ministers, Biocubafarma is working intensively on pioneering scientific projects, to develop new medicines, diagnostic systems and medical equipment, among other health products. The institution also undertakes projects in the field of

agricultural and livestock biotechnology as part of its mission to contribute to food production in the country.

According to Dr. Eduardo Martínez Díaz, first vice president of Biocubafarma speaking to **Granma International**, the organization is composed of 31 affiliated entities and 62 production centers, with a staff of 22,000 workers. It is also the result of the merging of entities affiliated with the Cuban Scientific Complex located in the east of Havana and business group Quimefa, with over 30 years experience in the field.

“The most important thing is the social impact of our products,” states the Cuban director in reference to Biocubafarma and Ministry of Public Health’s (MINSAP) contribution to important health indicators, such as the country’s low infant mortality and high life expectancy rates, among others.

As is well known, in 2015 Cuba became the first country in the world to eliminate mother-to-child HIV-AIDS transmission, an important accomplishment, made possible thanks to diagnostic equipment and antiretroviral medicines to treat HIV and AIDS patients supplied by BioCubaFarma.

Martínez Díaz also listed several of the institution’s globally renowned products such as Heberprot-P designed to treat foot ulcers in diabetic patients; Pentavalente; Interferón to treat viral infections and cancer; Estreptokinasa for heart attacks; Policosanol (known as PPG) to treat cholesterol disorders; Prevenox for bone ailments; Abexol for gastritis, and Palmex for prostatic hyperplasia (BPH).

Others include monoclonal antibodies and anti-cancer medications such as; Nimotuzumab to treat brain and throat cancer; Vaxira and CIMAvax EGF for advanced lung cancer; Eritropoyetina human recombinants for chronic anemia; and Filgrastim a granulocyte colony-stimulating factor (G-CSF) for patients suffering from Leukopenia, among other Cuban patented products available in 40 countries worldwide.

The Center has various medical teams which work on hearing screening and audiological diagnosis programs, developing devices for physical-motor rehabilitation; hearing-aids;electroencephalography; equipment used for research into neurodevelopment disorders; digital electrocardiographs; transportable blood pressure, physiological and two-phase monitors; and blood glucose meters.

The results of Biocubafarma’s efforts contribute to the development of the Cuban economy given that the island’s greatest export potential lies in its health services and products, which enjoy high added value and are constantly being diversified and expanded, notes the vice president, also adding that “We are working on over 450 projects across our research and development departments, which will enable us to increase the number of medications in Cuba’s catalogue of basic medicines and substitute some which are currently imported. What is more, many of these novel products are global firsts, which will also allow us to increase exports to the international market.”

Taken from Granma.cu

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