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## US-India Healthcare Summit to help alliances

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NEW YORK: The USA-India Chamber of Commerce (USAIC), a bilateral Chamber of Commerce aimed at promoting and facilitating trade and investment between the United States and India, will organize its annual US-India BioPharma & Healthcare Summit on May 14, at Hyatt Regency Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Co-Chairs for 2009 Summit are Dr. Martin Mackay, President Global R&D Pfizer; Hari Bhartia, Managing Director, Jubilant Organosys; Jeff Elton, Senior Vice President, Novartis Institutes of Biomedical Research and Dr. Naresh Trehan, Chairman, Global Health Pvt. Ltd.

Leading industry leaders and academicians are on the Advisory Board, and McKinsey and Company is the Knowledge Partner for the Summit.

"The Summit is part of an ongoing dialogue with all the stakeholders including industry, investors, policy makers and academia," said Karun Rishi, President of USAIC. "We have created an ecosystem where all stake holders meet to share and learn. This unique platform creates mutually beneficial opportunities for the US and Indian industry necessary to take the business to the next level. The platform encourages both established and emerging companies. Over the last few years, our initiatives, regular follow up and consistency of approach has greatly contributed to the industry friendly policies, fostered innovation and created business opportunities."

According to Dr. Mackay, "Pfizer has a network of research partners in biotech companies, academic institutions, hospitals and contract research organizations (CROs). This global network includes scientific collaborations with Indian researchers and dozens of planned and ongoing clinical studies in India. As part of Pfizer strategies to grow the business in emerging markets and pursue the best science, our R&D organization is leveraging the capabilities of this network to assist with drug discovery and development. Pfizer also is exploring opportunities to expand the scale and scope of clinical trials in India."

Added Bhartia of Jubilant Organosys, "As we see the pressure to reduce healthcare costs and find innovative solutions to unmet needs build up, the necessity to leverage the global intellectual enterprise takes centre stage. Over the years India has emerged as a preferred destination for the development of knowledge based industry. The Pharmaceuticals and Life sciences industry in particular has revolutionized the ways of doing business through alliances and collaborations between large innovator companies and Indian research boutiques and integrated pharma players."

Rishi adds that "The positive side of current economic downturn is the likely growth in discovery research business between India and the US. Many US companies sitting on the fence will be compelled to seriously consider integrating India in their global R&D strategy. This is the time for Indian companies to ramp up their capacity and quality standards."

"Private sector hospitals in India can play an important role in capacity building to provide healthcare to Indian masses," says Dr. Trehan. "Just providing services will not be enough. Hospitals in India will have to integrate research in their business model. This will create a great opportunity for everyone involved in the discovery process and will ultimately benefit the patients."

The growth in the healthcare services in India is driven by the 350 million strong middle

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class people aspiring for quality healthcare services. According to the WHO report, India needs to add 80,000 hospital beds each year for the next five years to meet the demands of its growing population added Dr. Trehan.

With Obama administration's strong interest in healthcare, we see a huge opportunity for the US and Indian companies to work together to create affordable and high quality drugs for everyone in the world. With the new administration, stem cells research is getting a strong support. Some Indian companies are doing cutting edge work in the area of stem cells. Innovative and industry friendly policies in both countries can help create solutions to cure diseases by leveraging stem cell technologies added Karun Rishi.

Dr. M.K. Bhan, Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Biotechnology, and Ashok Kumar, Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Pharmaceuticals are expected to participate. Discussions will focus on drug discovery, clinical research, industry-academic partnerships, healthcare opportunities & challenges, investment opportunities and cross border Mergers & Acquisitions trends. The Summit will help create cross border strategic alliances and partnerships to survive and grow in a tough economy.

Noble Laureate Prof. Sydney Altman Sterling Professor of Molecular Cellular & Developmental Biology and Professor of Chemistry, Yale University will also address the Summit. Large numbers of Professors and Deans of schools of Medical and Public Health have confirmed their participation. The interest for strategic alliances and collaborative research is strong and growing.

Top tier life sciences focused venture capitalists, private equity firms and investment bankers have shown great interest in the Summit. Since the last Summit, some venture capitalists have set up India/Asia focused funds. This trend has slowed down due to current market situation. It is likely to pick up once markets bounce back and Venture Capitalists are able to raise money for their funds.

"Recent wave of M&A in the industry, especially acquisition of Wyeth by Pfizer and Schering Plough by Merck & Company has created a momentum for consolidation in the industry. This trend will likely continue. It will likely impact the Indian market too. We will see consolidation and acquisition activity in the Indian market in the coming months," added Rishi.