

FICCI Heal 2014: Innovation enabling access to health

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The annual healthcare conference 'FICCI Heal 2014' with the theme "Innovation Enabling Access", was held last week and focused on various opportunities and challenges to promote innovation, which can change the current paradigms and move towards better, efficient, and cheaper methods for accessible, affordable, and quality healthcare in India. FICCI also released two knowledge papers on 'Healthcare Innovations and Domestic Manufacturing' and 'Medical Value Travel in India'. The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and Apollo Hospitals organized the event.

Ms Sangita Reddy, chairperson, FICCI Health Services Committee and joint managing director, Apollo Hospitals Group, said, "Across industries, disruptive innovations have brought forth greater efficiencies, efficacy, economy and higher quality. The healthcare sector too needs to nurture such innovations as they are the need of the hour. Our nation, like most other across the world is standing at the precipice of a crisis created by the burden of disease and woefully inadequate healthcare infrastructure. Over the last four years, FICCI has been making sincere efforts to encourage health innovators, offering solutions to deliver care more effectively while improving access and quality from the grassroots level."

Dr Didar Singh, secretary general, FICCI while supporting the central theme of the conference announced, "We propose to create virtual pooling of industry CSR funds by creating IISH (Indian Industry in Solidarity for Health) Kosh to channelize funds into priority areas in healthcare identified by the government. FICCI Health Services Committee is keen to work with the Health Ministry to develop a directory of healthcare activities based on the priorities of the government so that the CSR funds are channelized in the right direction to support National Health Assurance mandate of the government".

In his Keynote Address, Mr Sunil Wadhwani, founding donor, Wadhwani Initiative for Sustainable Health shared that we should develop a national ecosystem for healthcare innovation, and create a computerised knowledge hub. He further shared that out of the total innovations in the country; we should select the best 300 to 400 innovations and raise 200 million dollars to promote them.

In her Keynote Address, Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh, regional director-SEARO, WHO emphasised the need for prevention rather than cure. She shared that in India there are two types of needs in the healthcare sector, basic needs and health

innovation. She further shared the three areas in which India needs innovation, which are innovation in R&D, Health innovation, i.e. technical & devices and Household innovation.

Expressing his views on the Medical Technology sector, Dr GSK Velu, co-chair, FICCI Health Services Committee, and founder and MD, Trivitron Group of Companies shared in his concluding remarks that the Medical Technology segment needs more focus and attention in India due to a very high import dependency and lack of large scale domestic manufacturing initiatives due to several challenges faced by local producers. Keeping in line with the new government's vision to make India Self Reliant with local manufacturing initiatives, FICCI has partnered with E&Y to bring this comprehensive knowledge paper to showcase the challenges faced by this Industry and FICCI will be happy to work with the Govt of India to create an ecosystem for making the Medical Technology segment self-reliant by facilitating continuous interactions with various stakeholders in this Industry."