

OPPI holds conclave on healthcare in India

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Bangalore: Improving access through innovation and research and development aimed at finding tomorrow's cures will continue to remain the primary focus for innovative pharmaceutical companies in India. This was the understanding that emerged from the conclave of Organization of Pharmaceutical Producers of India. The theme of the conclave was 'Access, Innovation and Reach of Healthcare in India'.

The conclave brought together globally-acclaimed professionals, experts, government officials and other stakeholders of the healthcare and allied sectors to chart a way forward to help achieving the healthcare goals of India. Among those who participated were Mr Dilsher Singh Kalha, secretary, Department of Pharmaceuticals, Government of India; Dr (Ms) Nata Menabde, WHO-India representative and Dr K Srinath Reddy, president, Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI).

According to the OPPI, research-based pharmaceutical companies have created roughly 50 health partnerships over the last decade that have been helping improve the health of millions of people. While some have increased participation in charitable programs and joint public-private initiatives aimed at treating infectious diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis, others are furthering disease awareness programs and building support networks for doctors and patients, all while continuing research and development to find new cures and treatments.

Mr Tapan Ray, director-general of OPPI, said, "Access to healthcare comprises not just of medicines, but more importantly a robust healthcare infrastructure, including doctors, paramedics, diagnostics, health centers and hospitals. In India, the demand for these services has outstripped supply. However, the key focus of the government has still remained primarily on access to medicines. There is an urgent need to have a holistic approach in developing adequate healthcare infrastructure, efficient delivery system for medical supplies and creation of a talent pool of healthcare professionals or paramedics to ensure adequate access to healthcare for all the citizens of the country. The OPPI has undertaken a study on 'Enhancing Healthcare Access in India'. The study aims at identifying the key barriers in accessing healthcare today, what needs to be

done to eliminate these barriers and develop a roadmap for improving healthcare access in the country."

Mr Ranjit Shahani, president, OPPI, said, "Research-based pharmaceutical companies have a long legacy of corporate responsibility in India, with countless contributions to the improvement of health outcomes in the country. We are working every day around the clock to find new treatments and cures for society's greatest health problems."

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Nata Menabde, WHO India representative, said, "If the government provides effective financing to deliver services to people in a responsive way, ensure fair regulation and provide the necessary manpower, the performance will dramatically improve regarding easier access to facilities, better quality of services and higher system efficiency. This will ultimately contribute towards improved population health."

Highlighting the need for Universal Health Coverage in India, Dr K Srinath Reddy, president, Public Health Foundation of India, said, "The journey towards a better healthcare system in India has begun with the Prime Minister announcing 12th Five Year Plan as the Plan for Health. The proposed increase in public expenditures on health from the current level of 1.2 percent of GDP to at least 2.5 percent by the end of the XII plan, and to at least three percent of GDP in the 13th Plan is a step closer towards realising the universal healthcare coverage 2022 vision that seeks to entitle universal health entitlement to every citizen, guarantee access to an essential health package and integrate health care delivery."