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Indian student develops molecular condom

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WASHINGTON: The University of Utah is working on deals with four Indian companies for commercialisation of cutting edge anti-HIV and contraceptive delivery products including a molecular condom developed by an Indian student.

Developed by Kavita Madanlal Gupta, an international student from India currently working toward a PhD in bioengineering, and Patrick Kiser, an assistant professor of bioengineering at the university, the condom will be commercialised through a partnership with India's Pregna International.

Microbicides, such as the microbicial molecular condom developed by Gupta, are seen as a way for women to gain power by protecting themselves from HIV, the university said on Tuesday. Pregna and the university will together work on this and a variety of other technologies, which have the potential to provide humanitarian aid to the people of India.

The dynamic partnership between the University of Utah and Pregna International, a world leader in contraceptive manufacturing located in Mumbai, will focus on the commercialisation of cutting edge anti-HIV and contraceptive delivery products for the Indian marketplace, it said.

"There are over two million individuals living with HIV/AIDS in India today with 84 per cent of the infections resulting from sexual transmission of the virus," said Kiser.

"The university's portfolio of innovative technologies coupled with the product development experience of Pregna could help the control of the spread of this devastating disease.

"This partnership will give the university a chance to place their technologies in the hands of people that need them most and will enhance the value of our technologies in the developed world," he said.

Apart from Pregna, the university's vice president of technology venture development, Jack Brittain will also sign memoranda of understanding with Globberian, Global Health Private Ltd. MediCity and Manipal AcuNova Ltd.

The memoranda to be signed in the presence of Utah Governor Jon Huntsman who is currently leading a trade delegation to India, in Mumbai and New Delhi will initiate a long-term international collaboration between the University and India.

The university will work with each of the four companies to create a progressive alliance to accelerate commercialisation of university-invented technologies, expand educational and research opportunities, as well as aid in humanitarian efforts.

"These Indian companies are unique partners for the University of Utah," Brittain said. "Their leaders are innovative and eager to bring new medical technologies to their community."

"Partnering with Indian companies will allow the university to benefit from their expertise and willingness to engage in collaborative research and development. Through this alliance we will be able to accelerate commercialisation of University technologies and provide economic benefits to both the United States and India.

"The University of Utah is continually contributing to the strength of Utah's economy through the commercialisation of their cutting-edge research and technologies," said Huntsman.

"As the home of Nobel Prize winner Mario Capecchi, the University of Utah has been appropriately recognised as an international leader in research. Working collaboratively with India through these four international partnerships, the University of Utah will open up opportunities for existing businesses and aid in the start-up of new companies which will create meaningful jobs through a strong humanitarian focus,"

he said.

Globerian, headquartered in New Delhi, is a world leader in health information technology, research and healthcare practice management. It will help medical and bio-informatics researchers and students at the University of Utah identify emerging opportunities for the development and commercialisation of its medical informatics expertise.

Future collaborative efforts may include advancing health information research and data management technologies to provide individuals and institutions global access to health information.

Manipal AcuNova Ltd., a global clinical research organization based in Bangalore, will help university researchers more efficiently conduct clinical trials in India, accelerate collaborative medical technology commercialisation, and offer students a practical experience in an international business-research setting.

Global Health Private Ltd., MediCity, is currently developing a four-million-square-foot, 40-acre facility in Gurgaon.

Backed by clinical and biotechnology research, it will provide medical care to the growing middle class in India. Their partnership will facilitate collaborative efforts to enhance healthcare delivery while providing international experience for students, the university said.

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