

DESERET Morning News

India firm and U. form partnership

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The University of Utah and an Indian company have entered into a collaboration to produce and distribute cutting edge anti-HIV and contraceptive products, the U. announced Tuesday.

Utah Gov. Jon Huntsman Jr. will sign a memorandum of understanding with Pregna International while in India this week on a trade mission. The partnership between the U. and the company based in Mumbai, India, will focus on commercialization of the molecular condom, technology developed at the U.

More than 2 million people live with HIV/AIDS in India today, and 84 percent of the infections result from sexual transmission of the virus, according to a university news release. The microbicidal molecular condom allows women to protect themselves with a liquid "condom" that turns into a gel-like coating when injected internally and releases an antiviral drug when exposed to semen.

The technology was developed by Patrick Kiser, an assistant professor of bioengineering at the U., and Kavita Madanlal Gupta, an international student from India who is working toward his Ph.D. in bioengineering at the University of Utah.

Pregna International is a world leader in contraceptive manufacturing. Given its experience in the Indian marketplace, the university said Tuesday, the anticipated long-term partnership with the company will allow Indian women increased access to the possible life-saving technology.

Also as part of the trade mission, Jack Brittain, vice president of Technology Venture Development at the U. is signing three additional memorandums of understanding between the U. and Indian companies: Globberian, Global Health Private Ltd., "MediCity" and Manipal AcuNova Ltd.

The memorandums of understanding focus on collaborative efforts between the Indian companies and the U. for medical research, education, development of health information technologies and clinical research.

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