

Merck Serono

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Living Innovation



Presents

Roundtable on Rural Access in Health Care

Improving Access, Innovation and Reach

August 30th, 2013

Conference Room no. II,
India International Centre,
New Delhi

10:30 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

Knowledge Partner



Media Partner

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Background of the Roundtable

Ability, Accessibility and Affordability are the key cornerstones on which successful Healthcare delivery rests. However, in the Indian context the lack of said amenities has deepened the gap that exists within our healthcare infrastructure; especially in rural India. For the majority of our population residing in rural areas awareness and healthcare delivery have not just been inadequate but also unsustainable in providing long standing services of quality. The need of the hour is for both the corporate and government entities to bring in capabilities that can complement each other to provide a comprehensive and fully functional model of healthcare awareness, delivery and capability.

This roundtable is aimed to understand the current challenges facing rural healthcare and identify cohesive models that cater to the needs of the people.

Our roundtables are highly interactive where all participants contribute to the discussions and share their own experience with other participants.

Topics of the Roundtable

Session 1 – “Rural Access to Healthcare”

- Pharma Best Practice : 3 Case Studies
- NCD : Government Approach

Session 2 – “PPP in healthcare Delivery”

- Government initiatives, policy and the challenges faced
- How we can look at making a robust model for delivery : NGO perspective
- Learning from Nutrition Delivery based PPP Programs

Session 3 – “Skilling Health Workers”

- How to meet occupational standard for healthcare support staff
- Assessment Framework for Healthcare workers and job opportunity for rural youth in healthcare services

About RMAI

RMAI (Rural Marketing Association of India) is an industry body of strategic thinkers and implementation agencies in rural marketing domain. The objectives of the Association are :

- To improve the overall understanding of rural markets by the corporate world by conducting seminars, workshops and conferences, besides offering guidance to management Institutes in running courses in rural marketing.
- To undertake syndicated research in rural marketing on selected topics, which will help increase the knowledge base of rural marketers and in turn could help marketers develop better and more effective rural marketing strategies.

About Merck Serono

Merck in India established its roots way back in 1885 and is committed to transforming lives through medical science. The company specializes in the treatment of cancer, neurodegenerative diseases, infertility, endocrine and metabolic disorders, cardiovascular diseases and other serious, life-altering diseases. Merck Serono is a trusted name and market leader in prescription multi-vitamins for several generations now.

Merck Serono's corporate culture has always been characterized by responsible behavior – whether with respect to its products, employees, the environment or society. Merck Serono's approach and behavior have evolved from a history dating back more than 340 years and are shaped by a family of owners whose entrepreneurial creed begins with the sentence "Entrepreneurial success starts with people".

About OPPI

Organisation of Pharmaceutical Producers of India (OPPI) established in 1965 is a premier association of research and innovation driven pharmaceutical companies in India and is also a scientific and professional body. It caters to needs of Research based Pharmaceutical Industry thereby creating and sustaining an environment conducive to innovation and growth, simultaneously, facilitating industry and stakeholders partnership through various advisory and consultative processes to achieve the Healthcare objectives of the Nation.

Vision of OPPI

OPPI is committed to addressing India's healthcare needs by:

- Facilitating greater access to quality healthcare solutions
- Encouraging research and innovation
- Disseminating knowledge and sharing best practices
- Contributing meaningfully in policy dialogue

Synopsis

“The Hall of Health – Roundtable on 30th August, 2013”

Nothing seems to be more pleasing to our intellectual selves than hearing a group of influencers and decision makers expressing theirs and accepting each others' perspectives on an issue critical to all of us. Yes ! “Healthcare”. On 30th of August, India International Centre, New Delhi saw a conglomeration of leaders of some of the largest pharmaceutical companies, policy makers, NGO leaders, academicians and consultants in the Roundtable organised by the “Rural Marketing Association of India” sponsored by “Merck Sereno” and “Organisation of Pharmaceutical Producers of India” as knowledge partners. One of the interesting features of the roundtable was the event being telecast live on web for a greater benefit of larger audience.

To set the context of the discussion to follow, Mr. Pradeep Kashyap, President of RMAI, expressed his concern over a great percentage of people in India falling into the trap of “Poverty Penalty”. Giving examples of “Scandinavian Countries” like Sweden and Austria and developed nations like UK, Canada and Japan, he quoted that “Healthcare systems in these countries were set in place not when they were rich, but when they were in distress. Constraints in resources does not matter what the makers of healthcare system need is to see a ‘Utopian Dream’. They need to articulate their vision, develop footprint and essentially lay a time bound plan and act on it. Changes cannot happen in a piece meal way, but it has to start in a scoop”.

The official kick off to the event was done by Mr. A K Ramamurthy, Acting Chairman, Dept. of Revenue. He advised all the stake holders to not take a “hop, step and jump approach” but to gradually penetrate into rural India with a purpose. Interaction with all the stakeholders, including journalists, policy makers, implementers and beneficiaries, according to him is extremely important at the design stage itself. He encouraged the private sector to come out with need based innovative ideas, and avail support from the governments to pilot and scale them. There has to be an ‘marriage of the public and private sector’ to solve the problems. Moreover, he was of opinion that organisations should form “consortiums” and be in a better position to provide end to end solutions to solve some of the most critical challenges that our world faces today. He finally concluded by emphasizing the need for taking care of the needs of the human resources for healthcare in the country to motivate them to work better for rural communities.

Addressing the need for the improvement of skills of the medical fraternity, Mr. Lawrence Ganti, from Merck enlightened the audience about how Merck as an organisation is improving the skills of medical fraternity by providing training to them. ‘Collaboration’ according to him, among all the stakeholders is extremely important for universal coverage of rural markets. He reiterated that ‘Speed’ is extremely important if we want to create an impact and reach the numbers. His mantra was ‘Think what you can do more quickly. It is high time that we give away the habit of saying ‘we want to do’.

A representative from fraternity of social enterprises, Mr. Keerti Bhushan Pradhan, an advisor to “Vision Spring”, enthralled the audience by demonstrating how a pair of glasses (simple solutions) can avert some of the most complicated issues like blindness and other eye disorders. Corporates like Sahaj which have extensive distribution networks have played a key role in helping teach a pair of glasses to the Indians sitting at the last mile as well as provide opportunities for livelihood to them.

Mr. Chandramouli of Abbott Healthcare, cited an example of how Abbott is helping practitioners improve their diagnosing capacities by developing for course for some commonly found and neglected diseases like Vertigo, thereby creating a win-win situation for doctor, patients as well as pharmaceutical companies. He also talked about the challenges of the ability to excite doctors to learn more deeply about ‘dry’ but ‘important’ topics increase the awareness of patients to manage their own problems and improving the ability of field force to do a more scientific detailing of product. This was followed by a talk by Mr. “___” from Novartis , who talked about the Arogya Parivar model based on the 4A's of rural marketing. Noteworthy, in the question – answer session was a comment made by Mr. Rajnish Rohatgi “Let all brands reach the tide, share would be sorted out later”.

The next round of discussion, on the important topics of “Universal Healthcare” was led by Ms. Kavita Narayan from Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) and a member of high level expert group (HLEG) of universal healthcare. She elaborated the fundamental principles of Universal healthcare and suggestions that HLEG made to the Planning Commission with respect to financing - from where to get funds for universal healthcare, regulation , quality and governance structure for such a system, service delivery , community participation and drug supply. She was in a strong favour of ‘Budget Movement Exercise’ which calls for reallocation of resources in the budget to healthcare. Also, she cited ‘We have platforms to get reviews on the best restaurants and theatres in the city, then why not hospitals ? Accreditation should be made mandatory for all healthcare institutions’. Also, she expressed her concern about ‘Quality of Care’ in comparison to quantity or zeal to just reach the targeted numbers. She also suggested the necessity for ‘grievance mechanism’ cells for healthcare for the benefit of community.

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After a short lunch break, Ms. Poonam Muttreja of Population Foundation of India, emphasized the importance of involving the community in the process of entire intervention. She gave an example of how “Jan Sunwai” are empowering people and making program leadership more accountable. An embarking statement by her was “If public is brought back in public health, then it will help’. What is needed to change the scenario according to her is ‘more accountability’ and ‘self regulation & ethics’. Finding solutions to develop extreme good designs for program management would help.

Ms. Deepti Gulati of Global Alliance of improved nutrition, was of opinion that clear technical operations definitions related to fortification we laid out to reduce dilemma in the food industry. Also, the prevailing fear of unknown be reduced. Companies also need to think beyond profits sometimes said she, asking them to not bother about profits at a particular stage.

Mr. Venkat Raman, an academician from FMS, New Delhi highlighted that there is a great deal of confusion as to what are PPPs. There is no firm foot on the concept. They have to be more trust based rather than profession based. He was also of opinion for creation of institutional structure for grievance of private sector within the government system. Also, private sector participation should be based more on technical strength than commercial strength. Obligations of both private and public sector should be clearly charted out at the initial stage of contract itself. Payment delays which form a prominent issue needs to find out solutions. Also, rigorous mechanism for regulation and monitoring and evaluation be laid out. Even private sector needs to internalize the greater rationals behind all these PPPs – health for all.

Ms. Gauri Gupta from NSDC and Mr. Rajat Khawas from Manipal City & Guilds talked about the skills in healthcare sectors. Ms. Gauri enunciated the role of health sector skill council & the need for laying down occupational standards. Also, training of trainers become necessary if we want to get the numbers right. The roundtable ended Mr. Rajat Khawas, strongly opined that there is a news to develop skills of rural people with rural mindset to work in rural areas.

To open up a new perspective someone was overheard saying ‘Healthcare does not need skills, we believe in healthcare to be de-skilled’

Overall, the roundtable opened up new vistas of learning for the entire healthcare fraternity

Dharmik Shah
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