

## Message from the chairs: NetHealth 2020

“Affordability is the key to accessibility but not at the behest of quality.”

Healthcare is one of the fastest growing sectors in India, and the Indian government has aggressive plans to develop India further into a global healthcare hub, leveraging its relatively lower priced treatment options. It presents a great opportunity for the growth of the entire health industry – medical devices, healthcare providers and pharmaceutical manufacturers. However, we see a gulf between the high-quality healthcare that makes us a hub for medical tourism and at the other extreme, Indians struggling to access basic health services.

Developing countries such as India are confronted with a host of daunting challenges. We find ourselves straddled between old world infectious diseases and new age non-communicable epidemics. Cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases, diabetes, and other NCDs are estimated to account for 60% of all deaths in India, making them the leading cause of death, ahead of injuries and communicable, maternal, prenatal, and nutritional conditions. Non-communicable diseases affect not only health but also productivity and economic growth. As India ages, it is likely to find the burden even more substantial. While the overall population of India will grow by 40% between 2006 and 2050, the population aged 60 years and above will increase by 270%. Elderly Indians will make up 20% of India's population by 2050, which means healthcare costs could jump substantially as a significant number of people will need frequent hospitalizations and regular follow-up and preventive care. However since independence despite the low healthcare spend and enormous population we have made massive strides in life expectancy, maternal and infant mortality, HIV and tuberculosis.

We have always found ways to make things affordable but healthcare is a different beast. India's contribution to affordable healthcare goes much beyond being a pharmacy of the world. It extends to affordable innovation which goes to the core of ensuring a global right to healthcare. Helped by a significantly lower cost base that supports a large talent pool of scientists and engineers, India's research engine is now driving a new model of innovation that draws on the philosophy of affordable access. With returns on investment plummeting to unsustainable levels in the West, companies are now rapidly leveraging India's “affordable innovation” platform.

However, affordability is not simple to implement; it requires creative, out-of-the-box thinking. To deliver affordability, we need innovation— be it devices, drugs or services. It is only by creating innovation in technology, strategies, practices and policies that we can take on local and global healthcare challenges.

Every year, the NetHealth Workshop brings together a multi-disciplinary audience from across the healthcare spectrum to share their ideas and break the conventional silos that exist in this field. Net Health is centered around people and technology that are changing the face of healthcare. This year's NetHealth will cover healthcare specific topics like Artificial Intelligence, Bio-entrepreneurship, Tele-medicine, Nanotechnology, 3D printing, and Investment & Incubation opportunities as well as ground-breaking academic research. This day-long workshop is for those working within the sphere of healthcare, be it clinicians, students, engineers, designers, innovators, policymakers or regulators, industry experts or anyone else working in support of healthcare.

We hope platforms like NetHealth can bring about innovation in every facet of healthcare so that no one in India lacks access to the latest that the ever-changing world medical technology has to offer.



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