



Grameen Health to Establish Independent Collaborations with Pfizer, GE Healthcare, and Mayo Clinic to Create Sustainable Healthcare Delivery Models for the Developing World

Partnerships Will Support Development of Business Models That Meet the Health Needs of 4 Billion People Around the World Who Live on Annual Incomes of Less Than \$3,000

BOSTON--(Business Wire)--

Grameen Health, an affiliate of Grameen Bank, the pioneering micro-financing organization in Bangladesh that shared the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006 for its work to alleviate poverty, announced today that it will establish independent partnerships with Pfizer Inc., GE Healthcare, and Mayo Clinic to create sustainable models for healthcare delivery in the developing world.

Grameen Health has chosen to work independently with these partners because of their respective expertise: Pfizer Inc is the world's largest research-based pharmaceutical company, GE Healthcare is the world's largest manufacturer of medical devices such as ultrasound and CT/MRI, and Mayo Clinic is the world's first and largest integrated, not-for-profit group practice.

These multiple, independent collaborations will focus on social business models in which the businesses are self-supporting and any profits are re-invested into the system in order to reach more of the poor. This approach is cost-effective and maximizes the benefits that patients receive. The models will be transferable to other healthcare delivery systems.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), among the biggest obstacles to improved health outcomes are inadequate health delivery and financing mechanisms that place the heaviest burden on the poor and sick, who are the least able to pay.

The independent collaborations will initially explore and evaluate ways to improve the existing Grameen Health delivery and financing systems in Bangladesh, with the aim of creating models that can be adapted for the needs of the 4 billion people around the world whose annual income is less than \$3,000.

"As we address the challenges of global health access, we are pleased to partner with these and other organizations that share our belief that solutions to improving access to medicines and healthcare can be socially responsible and sustainable, yet commercially viable," said Professor Muhammad Yunus, who shared the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize with Grameen Bank, which he founded and now directs. "In Bangladesh, we have found that only an economically viable solution can create the infrastructure needed to enable people to sustain themselves, alleviating the poverty cycle. We believe our knowledge and expertise in micro-financing can be applied toward the development of a sustainable health care system."

During the next year, the collaborations will focus on the following areas:

- Implementing primary health promotion and disease prevention programs. These are the most cost-effective steps in affordable health care, and include maternal and child health promotion and nutrition programs.

- Analyzing ways to expand and improve the current low-cost micro-health delivery and insurance programs at Grameen Health's 38 existing Kalyan clinics.

- Developing continuous training programs for nurses, technicians and physicians.

- Reviewing operating efficiencies and scope of services (e.g., telemedicine, mobile health care) at Grameen Health's Kalyan clinics.

- Introducing genomic, epidemiological, and outcomes research capability for the prevention and treatment of diseases relevant to the population in Bangladesh, with an emphasis on the best use of existing tested and approved procedures and drugs.

Grameen Health and its partners hope to develop appropriate and sustainable models for healthcare delivery and rural primary care clinics, with the goal of replicating these models in other countries. Pfizer is dedicating key employees to provide technical and advisory support to evaluate Grameen's existing healthcare delivery systems in Bangladesh. GE Healthcare will test delivery of ultrasound capability in rural clinics for early detection of abnormalities, and Mayo Clinic will work to improve the training, efficiency, and retention of staff at existing Grameen Health Kalyan clinics.

"Pfizer is honored to work with Grameen to explore the development of nonconventional, efficient and sustainable health financing and delivery models. We believe Grameen's world-renowned success in providing innovative financial solutions for the poor, coupled with Pfizer's health care experience, human capital and extensive arsenal of medicines, has the potential to improve the lives of millions of patients," said Jean-Michel Halfon, Area President of Canada, Latin America, Africa, and Middle East pharmaceutical operations, Pfizer Inc.

"GE Healthcare is committed to early health initiatives," said Omar Ishrak, President and Chief Executive Officer, Clinical Systems, GE Healthcare. "We have affordable

technology with advanced imaging and care capabilities that can make a difference to save lives. With the ubiquitous usage of ultrasound, GE believes it's provided a crucial tool in the early care of expectant mothers. We intend to work with Grameen Health to further understand and expand ultrasound usage in rural areas. Through this pilot program we plan to train providers in the usage of ultrasound, evaluate the product, the training and the workflow that would be needed to enable the full deployment of this technology. This is one positive step towards accessible and sustainable healthcare for the developing world."

"Mayo Clinic and Grameen are exploring opportunities where our organizations can work collaboratively based on the junction of our missions and strategic priorities," said Denis Cortese, M.D., president & CEO, Mayo Clinic. "These opportunities range from new methods of delivering care and dissemination of knowledge and best practices to education, clinical research and the use of new technology in non-traditional settings. Our two organizations are working diligently to find the opportunities that will have the best likelihood of improving health care delivery in developing countries."

Professor Yunus adds: "Improving health care access and quality worldwide is a huge and long-term project. We would like to invite other partners and thought leaders to join in on the collaboration with Grameen Health, or to create their own social health care business models and share the results with us."

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Global health project aims to aid poor

By Andrew Jack in New York

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Grameen Bank of Bangladesh is teaming up with [Pfizer](#) in a project designed to extend affordable healthcare through private insurance to the world's poor.

The world's largest pharmaceutical company is to loan three senior employees for a year and provide an initial \$200,000 (€136,000, £108,000) to expand Grameen's co-operative network of rural clinics, which are funded by cheap, pre-paid insurance premiums and low service fees.

The action marks a fresh effort by Muhammad Yunus, Grameen's Nobel prize-winning founder, to provide sustainable low-cost but high-quality healthcare to developing countries where government-provided medicine is often poor or non-existent and private services are rare and expensive.

It reflects Pfizer's efforts to expand its business beyond simple drug sales into providing and funding profit-making healthcare in the developing as well as the developed world.

The aim is to develop a service that will provide consistently high-quality but affordable care while making a profit as a "social business" so it is sustainable and independent of government or donor support. Once the model is refined, the hope is to extend it to help reach the estimated 4bn people living on less than \$3,000 a year.

Vidar Jorgensen, president of Grameen America, said: "The vision is to build services that are attractive to middle and higher income people, not branded as healthcare for the poor, which would be extremely high quality and cost effective. In order to work, we have got to bring in commercial partners who will get their capital back and make the business sustainable."

Grameen has 38 clinics in Bangladesh, established partly to tackle the fact that one of the main reasons for defaults on the group's microfinance loans was ill health.

Each clinic serves about 20,000 people, who pay annual premiums of up to \$2 a family and get large discounts on doctors' consultation fees. The clinics each make a small loss, and still require patients to buy their own medicines, which can often prove expensive. Grameen hopes to make them self-supporting, with 2,000 doctor-led clinics and smaller nurse-led satellite versions across Bangladesh.

Pfizer sells 100 patented and generic medicines on the World Health Organisation's "essential drugs" list to treat common diseases.

Jean-Michel Halfon, Pfizer's area president for Canada, Latin America, Africa and Middle East pharmaceutical operations, said the partnership could permit more efficient, higher volume and lower priced sales of the company's products and services within Bangladesh. The co-operation reflected Pfizer's recently launched "global access strategy" for medicines. "This is not philanthropy. We are trying to construct a business model that is commercially viable, socially positive and sustainable in the long term."

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