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QATAR BIOBANK INAUGURAL CONFERENCE TO EXPLORE FUTURE OF LOCAL HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY

Upcoming Networking Symposium to Gather Worldwide Experts for Discussion about Medical Research and the Future of Personalised Healthcare in Qatar

Doha, 02 February 2015: Qatar Biobank, a member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, is set to host the nation's first conference that will explore the development of Qatar's healthcare and medical research community this month.

Qatar Biobank's inaugural conference entitled '*Biobanking in the Context of Personalised Healthcare*' will gather local, regional and international experts to discuss the future of personalised healthcare in integration with Biobanking worldwide. It will be held on the 8th and 9th of February at the Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC) in Doha.

Qatar Biobank supports Qatar Foundation's mission to enhance national innovation and technology through medical research regarding prevalent health issues in Qatar. Through its collection of samples and information on the health and lifestyles of large numbers of the national population, Qatar Biobank is making vital medical research possible for scientists in Qatar, the region, and the world.

"Biobanks are a key component in today's healthcare sector because they allow us to revolutionise the practice of medicine through personalised care. Qatar Biobank's continued work to collect quality samples and information will no doubt allow researchers in Qatar and across the region to advance their understanding of human health and diseases in order to tackle Qatar's prevailing health issues," said Dr Hanan Al Kuwari, Chairperson of Qatar Biobank's Board of Trustees.

The event, a first of its kind in Qatar, will feature in-depth sessions about the importance of biobanking and its role in improving healthcare services. The conference will also lay the foundations for future cooperation between leading Qatari and global medical institutions that will contribute to the advancement of local and regional science and medical discovery.

"With Qatar's continued economic and demographic expansion in recent years, it is important to ensure continued health for the local population to safeguard the sustainability of future generations in Qatar, and personalised medicine through biobanking will enable us to do just that," added Dr Hadi Abderrahim, Managing Director of Qatar Biobank. "In personalised medicine, therapies are selected for the



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individual patient based on the levels of different biomarkers contained in the blood and tissues. That is why biobanks play a vital role in personalised medicine, as they provide the bio-specimens required for research to identify such biomarkers.”

A number of keynote speakers will attend the upcoming conference including Edward Abrahams, President of the Personalized Medicine Coalition in the USA; Ma'n H. Zawati, Professor at the Center of Genomics and Policy at McGill University in Canada; Elio Riboli, Director of the School of Public Health at Imperial College London; and Dr Hilal Lashuel, Executive Director of QBRI, among others.

Home to local, regional and international scientists, Qatar Biobank aims to nurture the local research culture by paving the way for medical breakthroughs that will ensure world-class healthcare for Qatar's citizens and residents.

The collection and analysis of DNA samples at Qatar Biobank complements the Qatar Genome Project launched in 2013, with the aim of diagnosing diseases more accurately and implementing personalised treatment in the future.

Throughout its pilot phase, Qatar Biobank has succeeded in collecting information and biological samples from more than 2000 members of the local community.

These samples, coupled with those that will be collected in coming months and years, will allow researchers an in-depth understanding of the growing genetic and environmental interactions of Qatar's population, which is a crucial aspect to the success of personalised treatments.

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About Qatar Biobank

Qatar Biobank is a member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development. Working with the Supreme Council of Health, Hamad Medical Corporation and scientists from Imperial College London, Qatar Biobank enables medical research on prevalent health issues in Qatar. Through its collection of samples and information about the health and lifestyles of large numbers of Qatar's population, Qatar Biobank makes vital medical research possible for scientists in Qatar, the region, and the world. Qatar Biobank is a unique resource that will raise Qatar's profile in biomedical research regionally and globally.

For more information:

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