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Sidra Selects Wuxi NextCODE to Power Population Genomics and Precision Medicine in Qatar

Utilizing the same technology as leading genomics institutions in the US, Europe and China will accelerate benefits to patients in Qatar, the Arab world and globally

Doha, Qatar, **07 October 2015** — Sidra Medical and Research Center (Sidra) and WuXi NextCODE, a precision medicine company using the genome to improve health worldwide, today announced a broad, long-term agreement to provide and co-develop comprehensive research and bioinformatics programs.

Within a flexible multi-year framework, the partnership will enable Sidra to leverage its world-class clinical, research and bioinformatics teams to deliver cutting-edge genomic medicine – for its own patients as well as enhance its expertise to develop national, regional and global genomics research initiatives.

The implementation will also allow Sidra to develop customized applications to support the genetic research needs of several health and research programs currently underway in Qatar, such as the Qatar Genome Project (QGP). QGP is a nationwide initiative launched by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser at the World Innovation Summit for Health 2013. Its aim is to generate genome sequence and molecular 'omics data on the Qatari population and link it to a national electronic medical record (EMR) system that will help chart a road map for future advanced health care through personalized medicine.

“Understanding the genome is the key to building a roadmap for better health outcomes. We are really excited to be a part of a ground-breaking national project like the Qatar Genome Project as well as other research programs that will empower us and our partners to improve the health of the people in Qatar. Our work on the QGP has the potential to develop applications that will take our research and expertise beyond Qatar’s borders,” said Dr Francesco Marincola, Sidra’s Chief Research Officer. “The partnership with WuXi NextCODE brings us key capabilities: a fully integrated and truly scalable bioinformatics system for ramping up our sequencing effort, build a global standard database and tools using population genomic and medical data to benefit research and clinical care.”

WuXi NextCODE’s technology was originally developed to conduct population research in Iceland – which is similar to the Qatar Genome Project in terms of sample size and participation. This system and its unique genomic database model - which manages and mines more sequences than any other system in the world – will streamline the flow of samples in and data out of Sidra’s high-throughput sequencing center. In addition to supporting the QGP, the implementation will facilitate clinical diagnostics and accelerate research priorities for the Genome Arabia Project, the genetics of type 2 diabetes as well as other research projects currently underway at Sidra.

In partnership with Qatar Biobank, another key institution in the QGP, Sidra is currently aiming to complete the pilot phase by May 2016. A whole-genome pilot of the Qatari population with a sample size of 3,000 – using the Wuxi NextCODE system - is already underway. As the genomics and bioinformatics hub for the QGP, Sidra has set up a lab within Qatar Biobank with Laboratory Information Management Systems (LIMS); Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Control (QC) metrics implementation and full speed data generation. Through innovation and integration of genomic technologies and health care, QGP will position Qatar as a global leader in personalized medicine and precision health.



“Qatar is a small nation thinking big, committed to playing a leading role in making sequence data a standard part of healthcare,” said Hannes Smarason, co-founder, President and COO of WuXi NextCODE. “Given our roots at Iceland and work with Genomics England and other large-scale projects, this collaboration is a natural fit for us. We are excited to be a part of it and to advance the practice of precision medicine with the stellar multinational team that Sidra has assembled.”

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About Sidra Medical and Research Center

Sidra Medical and Research Center, currently under construction in Doha, Qatar, will be a groundbreaking hospital, research and education institution, focusing on the health and wellbeing of children and women regionally and globally. Sidra will be a fully digital facility, incorporating the most advanced information technology applications in clinical, research and business functions. Sidra will initially have 400 beds with infrastructure to enable expansion to 550 beds in a subsequent phase.

Sidra represents the vision of Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser who serves as its Chairperson. The high-tech facility will not only provide world-class patient care but will also help build Qatar's scientific expertise and resources.

Sidra is part of a dynamic research and education environment in Qatar that includes leading international institutions, such as Sidra's academic partner Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar. Through strong partnerships with leading institutions around the world, Sidra is creating an intellectual ecosystem to help advance scientific discovery through investment in medical research.

Sidra will have a unique working structure with inter-professional collaboration at the heart, providing the best holistic care for patients and an unparalleled learning environment for its medical professionals. Sidra will combine the best in design, technology, operations and practices from medical centers around the world – to offer its employees an environment that is at once familiar and extraordinary.

About WuXi NextCode:

WuXi NextCODE offers uniquely comprehensive and integrated capabilities for using the genome to better diagnose disease and create better medicine. These include a full range of sequencing services through our CLIA-certified laboratory; the world's leading genome sequence analysis system; a novel database architecture that makes it possible to query, manage, store and share massive genomic data with unrivalled speed and efficiency; and the know-how and experience to apply genomics to optimize every aspect of drug discovery and development. With offices in Shanghai, Cambridge, Massachusetts and Reykjavik, we enable clinicians and researchers at institutions and companies worldwide to use the full power of the genome to diagnose, treat and prevent disease. WuXi NextCODE is a wholly owned subsidiary of WuXi AppTec, the operating subsidiaries of WuXi PharmaTech (NYSE: WX). WuXi AppTec comprises a leading open-access R&D capability and technology platform company serving the pharmaceutical, biotechnology, and medical device industries, with operations in China and the United States.

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