

QATAR BIOBANK TO HOST SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PRECISION MEDICINE

Doha, Qatar, January 9, 2017: Qatar Biobank is set to host the Second Qatar Biobanking Congress, focusing on precision medicine initiatives in Qatar and around the world as part of its mission to bring personalized healthcare to the country.

Under the overarching theme, ‘The Impact of Biobanking on Precision Medicine Initiatives’, the conference will be held from March 14 - 15 at Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC).

The two-day event will feature an international group of experts on biobanking, genomics and personalized medicine from around the world, with a focus on using precision medicine to improve clinical outcomes. Sidra Medical and Research Center (Sidra) and Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) are co-organizers of the congress.

Dr. Asma Al Thani, Chair of Qatar Genome Programme Committee and Board Vice Chairperson of Qatar Biobank, said: “By bringing together leading researchers, policy-makers and healthcare providers, the Second Qatar Biobanking Congress will advance the discussion of precision medicine around the world, and enable valuable knowledge sharing so that attendees may advance the efficiency and value of healthcare in their own countries.”

Qatar has made considerable efforts to move away from the ‘one size fits all’ approach to healthcare in the country with the aim of providing efficient and customized treatment for patients. “The shape of the global healthcare system is rapidly changing and is adopting patient-centric treatment practices. Through precision medicine, medical practitioners in Qatar will be able to provide the right medicine for patients at the right time. This will help us prevent and cure many of the healthcare issues the local population face, or may face in the future,” added Dr. Asma.

Launched in 2011, Qatar Biobank, a member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF), recently welcomed its 5,000th Qatari participant to its program. It collects biological samples from the local population in an effort to develop customized medical solutions to the various diseases and health issues prevalent in the country.

Qatar Biobank’s efforts will help researchers understand how lifestyle, environment and genes affect health locally, and eventually develop prevention and treatment plans tailored for each individual patient, as so-called ‘precision medicine’. Supporting that effort is Qatar Genome Programme, which is incubated under Qatar Biobank and recently sequenced its 3,000th genome.

The conference welcomes medical practitioners, health and genomic researchers, biobanking experts and the public to take part in planned debates. The wide-ranging sessions and presentations will primarily be themed around a review of precision medicine initiatives in Qatar; ethical and Islamic perspectives on biobanking and genomic research; worldwide trends in precision medicine; and industry case studies from Qatar, the region and worldwide.

Dr. Nahla Afifi, Scientific and Education Manager and Acting Director at Qatar Biobank, said: “The conference’s program is carefully designed to provide tailored knowledge to participants, especially those directly related to the field of biobanking and genomic research. In addition to an array of informative topics and sessions, the core of the agenda revolves around the progress Qatar has made in terms of developing its own precision medicine initiatives. We welcome everyone from Qatar and the region to register for the conference and to take part in valuable conversations.”

All those interested can register through the conference website:
<http://www.qatarbiobank.org.qa/qbb-conference/>

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About Qatar Biobank

Qatar Biobank, a member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, is a population-based platform where biological samples are provided by participants. Through the collection of samples and information on the health and lifestyles of Qatari citizens and long-term residents, Qatar Biobank aims to make vital medical research possible for scientists in Qatar, the region and the world.

Launched in 2012 in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health, Hamad Medical Corporation and supported by expert scientists from Imperial College London, Qatar Biobank completed the two-year operational pilot phase in 2014 marked by the official inauguration of the state-of-the-art facility by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation and Vice Chairperson of the Supreme Council of Health.

To learn more about Qatar Biobank and how to become a contributor, please visit:
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