

UCSD Health Sciences and Indian Institute of Technology Form Partnership

August 18, 2009

Debra Kain

Officials of the University of California, San Diego Health Sciences and the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur today signed a historic preliminary agreement to collaborate in the development of an International Medical Center (IMC) at IIT Kharagpur.

This agreement - marked by a signing ceremony in Kharagpur, West Bengal, India - is the beginning of a strong educational, research and clinical partnership between UC San Diego Health Sciences and IIT, Kharagpur. IIT, Kharagpur is the first and largest of the IIT chain of higher education institutes in India that focuses on engineering and technology. The goal is to jointly establish a state-of-the-art medical center at IIT Kharagpur, which will be the first of its kind between a U.S. University and an Indian Institution.

"This exciting partnership is an extension of UC San Diego Health Sciences' traditional core mission - to provide excellent and compassionate patient care, advance medical discoveries and educate future health care providers," said Mounir Soliman, MD, MBA, executive director of UC San Diego Health Sciences International. "The establishment of an academic medical center to include the best in clinical care, as well as undergraduate and post-graduate programs in medical education, will be a perfect partnership - bringing together the strengths of both institutions."

"In addition to IIT's strong education and research focus in engineering and the sciences, we also are keenly interested in medical science and technology, including biotechnology, imaging, drug development and other important areas of medical research," said Professor Damodar Acharya, director of IIT, Kharagpur. "The collaboration is believed to be among the first between an IIT and a public U.S. university in the field of medical education and research." Acharya also pointed out, "The aim is to initiate technology leveraged medical education and research to provide holistic health care for the entire life cycle at affordable cost to underprivileged, poor and tribal population of the region."

The agreement describes the two institution's collaborative plan to build a 300-bed, state-of-the-art hospital on land provided by IIT, Kharagpur. The International Academic Medical Center (IMC) will include a research and development center, as well as an infrastructure for the training of health care providers. UC San Diego will partner in developing the IMC, providing leadership and training in such areas as nursing, hospital administration, health information systems, pharmaceutical practices, telemedicine, quality assessment and safety, among others.

"As a well recognized, world-renowned institution, UC San Diego has earned a highly respected, branded name in the areas of clinical service, management, education and research. It is the only academic medical center in San Diego with an array of training and educational programs which will be useful to train international-based medical and administrative personnel who have access to clinical trials, the latest treatments and technology," said Tom McAfee, MD, dean of Clinical Affairs at UC San Diego Health Sciences.

UC San Diego and IIT, Kharagpur's research collaboration will include faculty, student and resident exchange programs and jointly supervised clinical trials. As for the development of undergraduate and post-graduate medical education, UC San Diego will advise IIT, Kharagpur as it formulates a medical curriculum at the IMC, with

the aim of meeting the accreditation requirements in India and the U.S. The IMC will be an academic unit of IIT, Kharagpur, where students can earn bachelors, masters, doctorates and postdoctorate degrees from the institute in fields including medicine and surgery. Physicians and researchers from UC San Diego will work at the IMC as visiting faculty to facilitate collaborative educational and research programs. IIT, Kharagpur faculty members will also spend several months each year as visiting faculty at UC San Diego.

"Our hope is to help transform health care by merging the resources of two world leaders in medicine and technology with the goal of promoting excellence in research and education," said Soliman. He added that the academic medical center at IIT, Kharagpur will provide a golden opportunity for UC San Diego medical students and faculty to study diseases from a new, global perspective.

"The long-term goal is to enable IIT to provide health care services to patients from the States of West Bengal, Jharkhand and Orissa as well as low-cost care for medically underserved populations, including tribal groups of the region," said Acharya.

The Government of India established IIT, Kharagpur in 1951 as the first of 15 engineering and technology-oriented institutes of higher education. It is officially recognized as an Institute of National Importance by the Government of India and is regarded as one of the best engineering institutions in the country.

UC San Diego Health Sciences encompasses the School of Medicine, the Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, and UC San Diego Medical Center - the system of patient services provided at Hillcrest, Thornton Hospital, La Jolla, the Moores UCSD Cancer Center, and other centers, primary and specialty practices of the UCSD Medical Group faculty physicians. As a top-tier academic medical center, its role is to provide leadership in improving health through research, education and patient care.

Media Contacts: Debra Kain or Kimberly Edwards, 619-543-6163, ddkain@ucsd.edu or kedwards@ucsd.edu

