IBM Launches University Competition to Combat Growth of Non-Communicable Diseases

IBM

ARMONK, N.Y. - 07 Oct 2011: IBM (NYSE: IBM [1]) and Novartis (NYSE: NVS) today announced the NCD Challenge, a competition among a number of the world's leading universities designed to tap the inventiveness of students to find new ways to address the rise of non-communicable diseases in both developing and developed countries.

Illnesses such as heart disease, stroke, cancer, asthma and diabetes are a global growing health concern with a far-reaching impact on the world's healthcare systems. The NCD Challenge is engaging teams of university students and faculty to design creative and entrepreneurial solutions to this growing problem.

According to the World Health Organization, nearly two-thirds of all deaths occur due to non-communicable diseases, of which almost 80 percent are in developing countries. Over the coming decade, some 388 million people worldwide will die of one or more chronic illnesses. However, with concerted action, research and new innovations, at least 36 million premature deaths could be averted by 2015.

Competing teams in the NCD Challenge will have a broad range of flexibility to develop new solutions that can scale to support both large and small populations in developing and developed countries. Each will compete to create new ways to promote disease awareness, to use technology to combat NCDs, and promote more efficient ways to provide care. The teams are supported by IBM and Novartis with mentors and subject matter coaching to provide industry expertise that will complement their knowledge and research.

IBM and Novartis created the competition to bring together industry and academia and act as a catalyst for new thinking in this area. "Encouraging innovation and engaging university teams to address the unmet needs of millions of patients affected by chronic illness could have a far-reaching impact on our healthcare system," said Katherine Holland, general manager, IBM Life Sciences. "IBM and Novartis are jointly sponsoring this competition to encourage the creation of new solutions that will make a difference to one of the world's major health epidemics."

Universities participating in the competition include: University of California, Berkeley Haas School of Business; Duke University School of Medicine; Schulich School of Business; University of Melbourne; London Business School; Said Business School, University of Oxford; University of Fribourg, in collaboration with Inselspital Bern; Karolinska Institutet; Copenhagen Business School; and Jordan University.

The competition will run through December 9, 2011. Winners will be announced in January.

The NCD Challenge is a key part of IBM's Celebration of Service [2], a program designed for IBMers around the world to volunteer and help with civic challenges and societal needs. This year marks IBM's centennial and healthcare continues to be one of its most important areas of industry focus. The company spends more than $6B a year on R&D and IBM is one of the few technology companies with large teams of physicians and other clinicians on staff to ensure healthcare's most pressing needs are met.

To learn more about the NCD Challenge please visit: www.ncdchallenge.com [3]

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