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IIT Hyderabad CfHE Fellow wins Gates Foundation Funding

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The funding from Grand Challenges Explorations initiative will help Jignesh Patel implement a Mobile Vaccine Service in Pune

Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad - Center for Healthcare Entrepreneurship (CfHE) Fellow has won funding from Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to implement an innovative Global Health and Development Research Project on increasing vaccinations coverage.

The project envisages providing mobile vaccine service including a smartphone-based management application that provides customized vaccinations at homes and schools and at a lower cost to ensure children in all section of the society receive vaccinations.

Jignesh Patel, a former Business Executive who joined the CfHE in 2018, is a winner of 'Grand Challenges Explorations' Grant and will take up his project titled 'VaccineOnWheels.com' under the firm Jivika Healthcare Private Limited. Thanks to the funding, he is working on increasing the demand for vaccination through convenience and will implement his unique and low-cost but high-on-convenience model in Pune as a pilot project.

This service is high on unconventional and creative because of 'VoW' factors: Zero waiting time, flexibility to caregivers, reduced cost of availing service, ensures zero chance of missed vaccination opportunity, maintains transparency, focuses on infants and caregivers as primary stakeholders, certificate of vaccination to educate caregivers on purpose of respective vaccination and it will act as motivation as well.

Speaking about this project, Dr. Renu John, Co-Head, CfHE and Head, Department of Biomedical Engineering, IIT Hyderabad, said, "The Biodesign Process thinking has helped in identifying the gaps in vaccination coverage in urban districts. Mr. Jignesh Patel has come up with a sustainable business model to fill these gaps while organically participating with the National Programs on Vaccination with a Beneficiary-Centric approach in Vaccination. He plans to develop a social mobilization as an easy adaptation of his model through digital campaigns. Once enrolled, this model will close the chance of missing out vaccinations to zero percentage."

The Grand Challenges Explorations (GCE) is a US$100 million initiative funded by Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation that supports innovative thinkers worldwide to explore ideas that can break the mould in how we solve persistent global health and development challenges. Mr. Jignesh Patel's project is one of approximately 50 Grand Challenges Explorations Round 22 grants announced by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. To receive the funding, Mr. Jignesh Patel demonstrated a bold idea in one of seven critical global heath and development topic outlined by the Gates Foundation.

Highlighting the role of CfHE in his success, Jignesh Patel said, "The 1 Year Residential Healthcare Entrepreneurship Program at CfHE helped me to understand the gaps in vaccine delivery model from close quarters and identify various issues faced by diverse stakeholders primarily from infants/caregivers/parents in getting vaccinated. The program helped me in understanding the on-ground bottlenecks of the Vaccination Delivery model in India (and also in various developing nations around the world). I envisage an organized and customized Vaccination Service for India as an answer to the issue."

Further, Jignesh Patel added, "Vaccination is a right for every child and parents as a child can be protected from many life-threatening Vaccine-Preventable Diseases (VPD). To increase the immunity of a child through vaccination instead of a child going to a clinic, the ecosystem should appreciate parents and child by taking the clinic to the child. It is time to transform the vaccination delivery system in India by following the maxim 'Customer is King' and treating the parents/infants as kings. This will help India in increasing immunisation coverage and keeping every child safe against all VPDs. To do so VaccineOnWheels.com will take appointment of caregivers to vaccinate their children and provide service with the mantra of 'Anytime, Anywhere' keeping in mind the overall cost of availing vaccination service far lower than existing facilities."

The Sanction Letter from Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation states: "Mr. Jignesh Patel of the CfHE – IIT Hyderabad in India will increase vaccination coverage among low-income urban populations in India by designing a mobile vaccine service including a smartphone-based management application that provides customized vaccinations at homes and schools, and at a lower cost. Vaccination offers excellent protection against many diseases, however, coverage is low among low-income populations in urban centres: immunization at private clinics is unaffordable, and public clinics have longer wait times leading to lost wages. They will develop an affordable, convenient, in-home vaccination service, and a smartphone-based management application to schedule appointments, automate routes, record vaccination data and collect customer feedback. Under the brand name of VaccineOnWheels.com through Jivika Healthcare Pvt. Ltd. they will pilot test their approach among low-income populations in three cities by recruiting and training healthcare workers and drivers and evaluating its effect on vaccination coverage."

An IT Engineer and an MBA (Sales and Marketing) graduate, Jignesh Patel has over 11 years of leadership experience in Business Development, Channel Sales, Sales and Marketing Strategy. Even when his corporate career was going from strength to strength, his passion lay in becoming a social entrepreneur. In 2018, he left the corporate world to take up a

Fellowship at CfHE, IIT Hyderabad.