#ArabHealth 2015: Princess Haya Calls for Sustainable Healthcare Systems to Advance Geriatric Care

Held under the patronage of Chairperson of Dubai Healthcare City Authority (DHCA) HRH Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein, wife of HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, the *Leaders in Healthcare Conference* opened today at the Dubai International Convention & Exhibition Centre. The most prestigious, high-level healthcare conference in the Middle East and a main feature of the 40th Arab Health Exhibition and Congress gathered prominent industry leaders to discuss strategies to advance geriatric care in the Middle East.

Attendees at the conference included HE Abdul Rahman Mohamed Al Oweis, UAE Minister of Health, HE Essa Al Maidoor, Director General of the Dubai Health Authority, HE Raja Al Gurg, Vice Chairperson, Dubai Healthcare City Authority Board of Directors, and other VIP dignitaries. Special honoured guest at this year's conference was Dr Sanjay Gupta, CNN's Chief Medical Correspondent.

In Her keynote speech at the Leaders in Healthcare Conference, HRH Princess Haya highlighted the importance of having a good strategy with clear objectives, the right financial and human resources, careful planning and determination to ensure patient-centered, outcome-driven, efficient healthcare that is sustainable and affordable. "It would be naïve to assume that the answers can be easily found, but as we are often reminded by HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, success doesn't often come easily, and certainly requires more than just luck."

"In order to make our health care systems sustainable and future proof, we must understand the challenge an ageing population presents to our healthcare and welfare systems," continued HRH Princess Haya. "We must have clear vision of what these systems would look like not only in the immediate future, but also in the next three to four decades. We must take a holistic view of the needs of older people, which cannot be done without their direct involvement in the design and delivery of services that meets their needs. Perhaps the most fitting description of patient centered care is "seeing the world through the patient's eye". Only then would we be sure that we have designed a system that can truly satisfy their healthcare needs."

In addition to speaking at Leaders in Healthcare, HRH Princess Haya also toured the Arab Health exhibition stands, including those belonging to the UAE Ministry of Health, Dubai Healthcare City, Siemens, Drager, and various others. Accompanying HRH Princess Haya on the tour were HE Abdul Rahman Mohamed Al Oweis, HE Raja Al-Gurg, HE Essa Al Maidoor, Dr. Sanjay Gupta and other dignitaries.

The 2015 Leaders in Healthcare Conference also featured contributions by Lord Stephen Carter, Group CEO Informa; Professor Heung Bong Cha, President, International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics; Professor Tawfik A M Khoja, Family Physician Consultant, Director General Executive Board, Health Ministers Council for Cooperation; Dr Jean-Pierre Michel, Chairman, European Union Geriatric Medicine Society, Dr Fawzi Abdulla Amin, Assistant Professor on Family and Community Medicine, Arabian Gulf University; Jeroen Tas, CEO, Philips Healthcare; and other high-level participants from across the globe.

Leaders in the Middle East are experiencing pressures from the rising population, coupled with ageing demographic patterns. These trends, in addition to the high incidence of non-communicable diseases, result in healthcare demands and challenges that require development of a robust healthcare infrastructure that can sustain efficient and effective healthcare delivery to the entire population. The Leaders in Healthcare Conference addressed strategies to sustain healthcare growth, methods to integrate geriatric care into the Middle East healthcare system, and the role of society at large in addressing geriatric healthcare.

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