



Media Release

Qatar announces largest cash endowment for medical care and research

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Qatar Foundation's Education City is to build an all-digital medical care and research centre with an endowment fund of eight billion US dollars.

The new centre will match the highest international standards in patient care, teaching, medical research and clinical practice, and will have particular expertise in the area of women's and children's health.

The facility will come on stream in four years time.

A key feature will be the harnessing of digital technologies at all levels – from basic administrative functions such as admissions, to the assembly and application of genetic coding in high-level research.

Provisionally dubbed the Specialty Teaching Hospital, it is the latest in a spectacular chain of projects that are steadily forming a futuristic "Education City" on the edge of the Qatari capital, Doha. This cluster of learning and research facilities is the powerhouse of the Gulf state's commitment to becoming one of the most developed, knowledge-based societies worldwide by the end of the decade.

Capital costs for the 350-bed hospital will amount to some 900 million US dollars, in addition to the establishment of the eight-billion-dollar endowment – the largest cash endowment of a hospital and research center anywhere in the world.

The hospital will serve as the primary teaching hospital of the Weill Cornell Medical College-Qatar, a branch of the renowned New York medical school which is already training future doctors and researchers at Education City. The College will be responsible for the clinical teaching and research conducted in the hospital and will be a partner with Qatar Foundation in its governance.

Weill Cornell medical students and graduates will have the opportunity to gain clinical experience in the specialties offered by the new hospital.

Within the new facility, the proposed research agenda incorporates clinical and translational studies, including a General Clinical Research Center. A major focus will be women's health issues, including fertility, diabetes and cardiovascular health, as well as neonatal and infectious childhood diseases. An associated genomic research program for the nation's population is under consideration.

While research in the new hospital will be funded on a competitive basis, WCMC-Q will provide essential leadership in the administration and delivery of research programs. A core sciences and technologies infrastructure will be established to support this research, as well as other Qatar national research initiatives.

A third partner is the Hamad Medical Corporation, soon to become an academic affiliate of Weill Cornell Medical College, which is a major Doha public healthcare provider offering high-level clinical care across a range of specialties.

The Hamad centre will make available complementary clinical services under an overarching concept of “one program in multiple institutions”.

Over the coming years Qatar is to invest in a network of new hospitals targeting various niches in the healthcare market. The Specialty Teaching Hospital will be its hub.

Qatar Foundation Chairperson Her Highness Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al Missned said: “I am delighted that we shall be able to offer this level of health service to the people of Qatar. The brightest minds in academic medicine will come together in the Specialty Teaching Hospital, and I expect its affiliated scientists and physicians to become creators of biomedical knowledge and to export it to the world at large.”

“Medical research, teaching and clinical practice are all vital ingredients of our vision for Education City,” said Qatar Foundation President Dr Charles Young, an experienced US academic leader who took up the post of CEO two months ago. “The next step is to recruit the world-class senior staff – faculty, practitioners and administrators - who will guide the project through to its operational launch in mid-2008.”

Dr Mohammad Fathy Saoud of the Qatar Foundation Board of Directors said the Specialty Teaching Hospital would become a focus for research in biomedical and clinical sciences, as well as meeting many of the immediate healthcare needs of the region: “This is one of the fastest-growing areas of academic endeavour, and the work conducted here, led by Weill Cornell clinicians and researchers, will undoubtedly offer promising opportunities for cooperation with the other universities and research institutes that are joining us at Education City.”

Dr Daniel R Alonso, Dean of Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar, said he was delighted his students could look forward to training in a world-class clinical environment. “After gaining one of the best medical qualifications around, it is fitting that they should have the opportunity to apply it and supplement it in a cutting-edge facility. Hamad Medical Corporation also represents a wonderful training venue across the range of medical conditions, and the strategic fit among the partners represented here is close to ideal.”

Dr Ghalia Al Thani, Chairperson of the Pediatrics Department at Hamad Medical Corporation, said she was particularly pleased that the new hospital would focus on women’s and children’s health. “Women of child-bearing age and children make up a very large proportion of this region’s population. The Specialty Teaching Hospital will ensure that Qatar becomes a globally recognised centre for pediatrics, obstetrics and gynaecology, and will be a magnet for the best researchers and practitioners in these fields. This will greatly improve the quality of life of many people, and will be of enormous benefit to our healthcare system in general.”

Editor’s note: The Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development is a private, non-profit, chartered organization, founded in 1995, which aims to develop human potential through a network of centres, including branch campuses of some of the world's leading universities, within a unique Education City.

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