

Press Release

High school students to be trained as change agents for a healthy society through CHAMPS initiative

Syngene, through Biocon Foundation, its CSR arm, Narayana Health and Agastya International Foundation join hands to launch this unique initiative

- ✚ CHAMPS (Child Health Activists Mentoring & Promoting Health in Society), initiative is aimed at developing high school students as community change agents in driving awareness on early onset of NCDs by training them to monitor and report on hypertension
- ✚ A mobile Science Lab also launched to further the knowledge of science amidst students

3rd August, 2019, Bengaluru

Syngene International Ltd, a leading global contract research organization, in association with Narayana Health, Agastya International Foundation and Biocon Foundation (Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) arm of Syngene), announced the launch of **CHAMPS (Child Health Activists Mentoring & Promoting Health in Society)**, a student mediated initiative focused on preventing and managing early onset of non – communicable diseases (NCDs). The initiative aims at educating and training high school students to be change agents towards improving health seeking behaviour in their communities at large. The inaugural event also saw the launch of a mobile science lab, that will tour various schools and is designed for students to practically experience the magic of science. Equipped with science models and specifically designed experiments, the mobile lab is intended to reach under-resourced schools in rural areas across the country.

In India, 60% of all deaths are caused by NCDs such as type 2 diabetes, cancer, heart and respiratory diseases. Studies conducted in various parts of India have reported high prevalence of hypertension with little to no awareness and control. The Fourth National Family Health Survey evaluated and reported hypertension in 207 million people (men 112 million, women 95 million) in India. The CHAMPS initiative shall address this public health issue of hypertension through 8th and 9th standard students who shall be trained to screen for these symptoms within their community. The initiative which is currently being rolled out as a five-month pilot, is intended to be a three-year long program focused on educating students in prevention and management of early onset of NCDs and promoting a healthier lifestyle among the members of the community.

The combined synergies of Narayana Health as knowledge partner, Syngene and Biocon Foundation as funding partners and Agastya International as the implementation partner will ensure greater awareness in the involved communities. The training modules are tailored to comprehension levels of students who have enrolled and has been designed to create awareness on hypertension and training them in the use of the Blood Pressure apparatus.

Kiran Mazumdar Shaw, Managing Director, Syngene International Ltd., in light of the initiative, said, *“As indicated in the ‘Hypertension in India’ report by National Centre of Biotechnology and Information (NCBI), the number of deaths in India, due to hypertension, has risen and the states with greater urbanization, human and social development have greater incidence of hypertension. Through the CHAMPS initiative, we shall engage high school students as change agents within their communities, by training them to screen for symptoms, i.e. record blood pressure readings and share it with relevant authorities. This will enable monitoring of NCDs in the communities for corrective actions to be implemented.”*

“Most of the patients with high BP are not aware of the problem and the consequences. In the process large number of Indians develop heart failure, kidney failure or brain stroke due to uncontrolled high blood pressure. Our aim of launching the Champs program is twofold, first we would like to detect high BP at early stage. This should prevent future complications by appropriate treatment. By training high school students to record BP we are introducing passionate young kids to the exciting world of medical profession and change the way healthcare is delivered across the world,” said **Dr. Devi Shetty, Chairman and Executive Director, Narayana Health**

Speaking on the occasion, **Mr. Ramji Raghavan, Founder Chairman of Agastya Foundation,** added, *“We are thrilled to partner with Syngene International, Biocon Foundation and Narayana Health on this unique program combining Science and health education. The fundamental idea of the CHAMPS initiative of developing children as change agents in raising awareness of one of the NCDs, namely hypertension, ties in well with Agastya’s philosophy of developing children as young instructor leaders, who are change agents imbued with a scientific temper. The mobile science van provides a means to support this initiative and gives children access to fun, engaging and interactive ways of learning science and sparks curiosity.”*

Extending his best wishes, **Shri S. R Umashankar, IAS, Principal Secretary, Education Department, Government of Karnataka,** said, *“I am certain that this health awareness programme will be imperative in creating the much-required health awareness among the younger generation, giving them a sound body to harbour a sound mind. This will in return strengthen our nation and help in building a healthier future. I am elated that our department is a part of this innovative health awareness programme through school children and I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Dr. Kiran Mazumdar Shaw, Dr. Devi Shetty and Mr. Ramji Raghavan for the same.”*

About Syngene International:

Syngene International Ltd. (BSE: 539268, NSE: SYNGENE, ISIN: INE398R01022), is an innovation focused global discovery, development and manufacturing organisation providing integrated scientific services to the pharmaceutical, biotechnology, nutrition, animal health, consumer goods and specialty chemical industries around the world. Syngene’s clientele include world leaders such as Bristol-Myers Squibb, Baxter, Amgen, GSK, Merck KGaA and Herbalife. Its innovative culture is driven by the passion of its 4000-strong team of scientists who work with clients from around the world to solve their scientific problems, improve R&D productivity, speed time to market and lower the cost of innovation. For more details, visit www.syngeneintl.com.

About Narayana Health:

With all super speciality tertiary care facilities that the medical world offers, Narayana Health is a one-stop healthcare destination for all. Founded by Dr. Devi Shetty and headquartered in Bengaluru, Narayana Health group is the second largest health care provider in the country in terms of operational bed count. The first facility was established with approximately 225 operational beds in 2000 at NH Health City in Bengaluru. The Company today, runs a chain of multispecialty, tertiary and primary healthcare facilities across India with a network of 24 hospitals and 7 heart centres and a single hospital overseas at Cayman Islands with over 6,200 operational beds across all its centres and potential to reach a capacity of around 7,300 beds. www.narayanahealth.org

About Agastya International Foundation:

Founded in April 1999, Agastya International Foundation (Agastya) is a charitable education trust that runs one of the world's largest mobile hands-on science education programs for economically disadvantaged children and teachers. Through all its programs, Agastya has reached more than 12 million children and 250,000 teachers in 21 states in India. By making practical, hands-on science education accessible to rural government schools, Agastya aims to transform and stimulate the thinking of underprivileged children and teachers. Agastya is supported by scientists and educators from the Indian Institute of Science, DRDO, and TIFR. The Prime Minister's National Knowledge Commission had recommended India-wide scale-up of the Agastya model. Task force on Innovation 2017 report recommended the Agastya model to be leveraged for revitalizing learning in government schools. Agastya has received worldwide recognition, including the Marico Foundation India Innovation Award, Google Global Impact Award, Give2Asia's Program Excellence Award, and Sandbox Catalyst Award at the 2016 Deshpande Development Dialogue. Agastya was named among 100 Global Innovators by the Rockefeller Foundation, and Agastya's 'commitment to action' was recognized by the Clinton Global Initiative in 2008.

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