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Contact: Kim Guevara – (415) 283-8379; Kim@Medweb.com

Medweb Employees Travel to Pakistan to Help Advance Humanitarian Telemedicine Mission

Project extends U.S. Digital Freedom Initiative -- showcases power of technology and connectivity to improve quality of life for remote populations

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (9 October, 2008) – Medweb employees from San Francisco, San Diego and Atlanta traveled recently to Islamabad and Rawalpindi to provide installation support and training for a pioneering telemedicine project in Pakistan.

As a result of this effort, the people of Pakistan have been empowered to tackle some of the difficult health issues in their country. Heart disease is one of the leading causes of death in Pakistan. The percentage of relatively young patients suffering from heart attacks is very high, yet there aren't enough cardiac specialists to cover the demand for care. Through the power of technology and communications, Medweb systems allow for better diagnostic tools, improved workflow and extended reach to remote and rural areas – thereby improving and saving lives, and offering stability.

Telemedicine delivers high quality medical services at the point of need and at an affordable cost, giving medical specialists and primary care givers timely text and medical image information via electronic communication. Imagine a typical cardiac ultrasound exam, which can be over a gigabyte of still images and video – transmitted just as easily and quickly as sending an email. Medweb's patented software and off the shelf systems move information instead of people in order to provide healthcare consultation and education for both patients and care providers – healthcare that would otherwise be lacking or absent in remote locations without sufficient availability of medical specialists.

In addition to cardiac consultation, the project also included technology to support tele-dermatology, teleradiology, obstetrics and gynecology, pre-operative planning and follow-up, infectious disease assessment, virtual clinical grand rounds, medical triage for trauma and acute illness and medical education and clinical training. This included Medweb's lay person-friendly webservers, collaborative telemedicine consultation software, secure encrypted web portals and integration of advanced medical peripheral devices such as portable ultrasound, spirometry, digital cameras, EKG, stethoscope and a computed radiography system for digital X-ray. Most of the equipment was able to connect via a USB-port – turning laptops into virtual mobile clinics.

Medweb also trained 30 system administrators, clinicians and technical support staff in how to configure and utilize the provided equipment. Within a few hours of arriving at Holy Family Hospital to do hands-on training and testing, obstetricians/gynecologists from the hospital began using the equipment to conduct patient exams and transmit and store images. Medweb's CPO (Corporate Philanthropy Officer) & Director of Emergency Management, Kim Guevara of San Diego, California, said, "It was a great moment to watch as all the project pieces came together and to see the excitement in the eyes of the clinicians and patients. This is a contribution that will save lives, and we are very proud and honored to be a part of it. We look forward to

building upon the success of this model to provide solutions to underserved communities in Pakistan and around the world.”

The project represents a strong public-private partnership between the U.S. Department of State, IBM, Medweb, Motorola, Wateen Telecommunications, USAID, U.S. Department of Defense Telemedicine and Advanced Technology Center, Holy Family Hospital in Rawalpindi, the District Headquarters Hospital in Attock and the Government of Pakistan. Mike Elste, Medweb Director of Government Accounts in Atlanta, Georgia, noted, “I was proud to participate in this project as it gave me the opportunity to foster friendships with the great people we met in Pakistan. It also gave me a sense of pride in our country to know we were providing much needed tools to assist in a humanitarian effort that fosters good will between the United States and Pakistan.”

Pakistani experts, IBM and the U.S. Government see great benefits from this state-of-the-art telemedicine system. “Our country’s population of 172.8 million makes it the sixth most populous country in the world,” said internationally recognized surgeon and telemedicine expert, Dr. Asif Zafar. “More than 75 percent of Pakistanis live in rural regions, but only 22 percent of doctors work there.”

“The U.S. Department of State, through the Pakistan Telemedicine Project, is demonstrating the transformative power of telecommunications technology under the U.S. Government’s *Digital Freedom Initiative*, which seeks to encourage the spread of technology to the developing world. Telecommunications technology not only underpins global economic growth and development but also can be used to promote good government and good governance – from online medical and educational initiatives that deliver services and opportunity to people and places too often overlooked, to e-government programs that increase the public trust. Under this public-private partnership, we hope to demonstrate how technology and Internet-based connectivity can significantly improve the quality of life for remote populations,” said Ferial Saeed, Deputy U.S. Coordinator & Office Director for International Communications & Information Policy.

Medweb’s experience in the delivery of telemedicine solutions enables healthcare professionals to better utilize technology in the treatment and diagnosis of patients in remote locations. The Pakistan Telemedicine Project leverages Medweb’s and IBM’s experience successfully implementing similar technology throughout the US Department of Defense and a humanitarian telemedicine project on the world’s most remote inhabited island, Tristan de Cunha. Medweb’s partnerships with the other members of this project, and the successes of the Pakistan Telemedicine Project, reinforce our commitment to provide solutions to underserved communities around the world.

Medweb’s President and CEO, Dr. Pete Killcommons, who also traveled to Pakistan to assist in the project roll-out and training, said “This project incorporates the very best of corporate and government partnership to exponentially expand access to quality healthcare in Pakistan. The creativity and ingenuity of the people in Pakistan have taken the project beyond what was originally planned and expanded the views of “what is possible”. This project, and this model, demonstrate how by giving a little, much can be accomplished for the betterment of healthcare and quality of life worldwide.”

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