

MTal MedTech Summit 2017: Demystifying the MedTech Sector

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MedTech industry presents recommendations to policy makers to improve “Ease of Doing Business”



The Medical Technology Association of India (MTal) held its maiden MedTech Summit today in New Delhi. The first-of-its kind Summit brought together the unique and much needed interface of policy makers, Industry, doctors with the patients. Key departments and ministries such as the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Department of Health and Family Welfare, and the NITI Aayog were represented at the Summit. The medical technology industry was represented by top MedTech companies including inter alia Abbott Vascular, Alcon, Bard, Bausch & Lomb, Boston Scientific, Johnson & Johnson, KARL STORZ, Medtronic, Olympus, Terumo, and Vygon India.

The MedTech Summit put forward some key asks and recommendations for the consideration of the policy makers that would pave the way for a more enabling environment for the industry.

Pavan Choudary, Director General said, “The healthcare sector rests on four pillars – Hospitals, Pharmaceutical industry, Health Insurance industry and the MedTech industry. The last of these is the least understood of all yet most significant for enhancing quality of healthcare, and has direct implications for patient outcomes. This implores the need for more nuanced approaches in policymaking for the sector. The sector needs to be uncovered and it is the patient who should do the unveiling, which is what the aim of this Summit is.”

In view of recent policy changes in the medical technology space, the industry stressed on the need for the sub-sectoring and sub-categorization of medical devices on the basis of the engineering complexity, for policy and decision clarity.

Import substitution as a focus of policies needs to be replaced with greater efforts directed towards ensuring global competitiveness through export promotion and meeting global quality standards. The recently presented NITI Aayog action agenda recognizes the significance of global companies’ presence for the domestic industry to compete with and grow.

Make in India, a noble initiative, should however be implemented in a phased manner. It must focus on the devices that have the potential to be made locally in the short run, instead of the advanced technologies that require a more enhanced ecosystem and know-how that may take years to develop in the country.

This means that policies must factor in the existing gaps in the domestic manufacturing industry, and promote ease of doing business by way of reduced inter-organizational delays, enhanced startup industrial finance, simplified regulations such as single-window clearance, and greater investment in infrastructure.

Another key recommendation put forth at the Summit was to expand the bed capacity in the country. This is particularly crucial given the rising burden of diseases in the country today and the lack of access to quality healthcare. Many pockets of the country remain underserved, and are calling out for real-time scaling up of solutions to address this demand. The expansion of the healthcare delivery system will automatically provide an impetus for the medical devices market to grow.

Further, for long term advantage, infrastructural development and fiscal incentives are needed to keep the wheels of innovation and R&D rolling. This will simultaneously help achieve the twin objectives of greater patient access as well as the availability of latest and high-quality technology.

Dr. Shekhar Agarwal, Chief Surgeon, Delhi Institute of Trauma & Orthopaedics, Sant Parmanand Hospital said, "A patient may compromise on the surgeon's fee and the quality of hospital room, but seldom on the quality of the medical device. Multinational companies have made significant training and capacity building efforts among healthcare workers in the country in the last few decades. Detracting from the progress made in the MedTech space will only set us back by decades."

Urvashi Prasad, Public Policy Specialist, Office of Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog said, "There is a need to look at medical devices holistically, and not through narrow prisms of singular initiatives and policies."

Dr. Dinesh Jain, Vice President – Clinical Data Analytics, Max Hospital said, "It is imperative for hospitals to be transparent in order for the healthcare sector to be more outcome-oriented."

Diwaker Rana, Chairman, MTal MedTech Summit, "At the Summit today, the patients' perspective reaffirmed how important medical technology and the quality of medical device are for transforming lives, and the physicians' perspective reiterated the importance of training in the adoption of medical technology for better outcomes."