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Ericsson and Apollo Hospitals to bring healthcare access to rural India

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Ericsson (NASDAQ: ERIC) and Apollo Telemedicine Networking Foundation (ATNF), a part of the Apollo Hospitals Group, the Indian healthcare powerhouse, have taken a major step towards helping bridge the digital divide in rural India by laying the foundation for the introduction of mobile health services. Telemedicine delivered using HSPA technology will enable the provision of affordable and accessible healthcare to millions of people in remote areas.

More than a million people, predominantly women and children, die each year in India because of a lack of healthcare. A further 700 million people have no access to specialist healthcare, as 80 percent of specialists live in cities. At the same time, the teledensity of India is increasing at a phenomenal rate. Telemedicine harnesses telecommunication technology to deliver healthcare and education to patients in remote regions. It enables easier access to healthcare for rural populations, helping to provide critical health information, save time and money, and reduce the need for travel.

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Ericsson and ATNF will enable them to work together to educate people and to publicize, promote and implement the use of telemedicine deployed as an application over broadband-enabled mobile networks.

ATNF will provide expertise in telemedicine, in the form of applications that provide instant medical advice remotely over the network. This will increase access to quality healthcare once the HSPA network is in place, and sets the stage for the creation of a stable ecosystem, based on WCDMA/HSPA technology, to support a range of innovative services.



The initiative builds on Ericsson and Apollo's previous collaboration in 2007 for the Gramjyoti project which showcased the benefits of mobile broadband applications across 18 villages and 15 towns in rural areas.

Mats Granryd, President of Ericsson India, says: "Mobility has proven to be a major catalyst for social and economic empowerment, and a key ingredient in helping to bridge the digital divide. Through our ongoing partnership with Apollo, we are putting an ecosystem in place to support telemedicine applications once the 3G network is deployed."

Prathap C. Reddy, Chairman of Apollo Hospitals Group, says: "With the availability of wireless technology, mobile health will be integrated into the healthcare delivery system. The new mantra could well be 'Healthcare for anyone, anywhere, anytime.' In our silver jubilee year, Apollo Hospitals dedicates itself, to make mobile health a reality for everyone in India."

This agreement is part of Ericsson's support for the UN Millennium Development Goals, which aim to halve extreme poverty and hunger by 2015, while improving education, health and gender equality. Ericsson has been working on several initiatives to demonstrate the use of telecoms in healthcare provision