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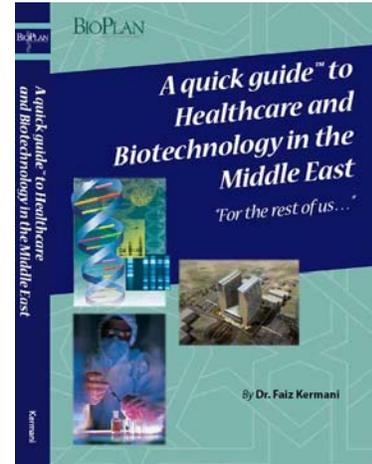
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New Book Reveals Strong Healthcare Industry Investment in Middle East

May 5, 2009 (Rockville, MD) – With most headline coverage limited to the region’s politics, the dramatic changes in Middle Eastern healthcare have almost gone unnoticed. However, BioPlan’s newly released *A quick guide™ to Healthcare and Biotechnology in the Middle East* “For the rest of us...” shows that dramatic changes are on the way.

“Healthcare is a universal right and regardless of region, everyone in the world should benefit from the advances that have been made in modern medicine,” notes Dr Kermani. The Middle East is experiencing a rising demand for healthcare, which is transforming this part of the world. As a result, there are new opportunities for private companies that did not exist even a few years ago.



Historically, most governments in the region provided free health care to their citizens, with varying degrees of success in the quality they were able to offer. However, most countries are finding that they need alternative strategies in order to meet the continuing demand. Demographic pressures alone will necessitate greater expenditure. Many countries in the region will face 2% annual increases in healthcare expenditure needs as a result of the aging of their populations.

As the book highlights, the difficulties that governments have had in planning for future demand has led to openings for private sector involvement in healthcare. This has been characterized by a number of high profile, innovative initiatives.

- In Oman, up to US\$1 billion is being invested to build an integrated health care city outside the capital, Muscat.
- In the United Arab Emirates, a similar project is underway, valued at US\$3.4 billion. Furthermore, the government actually handed over ownership of three public hospitals to a private company.
- In Bahrain, construction of a US\$1.6 billion health island, known as Dilmunia, has begun. Dilmunia will feature a mix of residential, leisure and commercial facilities encompassing comprehensive health environment.

“These changes are also driving a rise in medical tourism, with foreign patients eager to gain access to high quality healthcare at a cheaper price than in Europe or the US,” adds Dr Kermani. “In order to attract such patients, private companies are providing additional services such as international insurance, interpreters, travel agency and embassy assistance services, and arrangements for post-operative care.”

“A quick guide™ to Healthcare and Biotechnology in the Middle East” is available from BioPlan Associates, Inc., Rockville, MD 20850. Tel: 301-921-5979 (<http://www.bioplanassociates.com>)

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