

# THE HILL



## **Gates Foundation Provides Update on Developing World Health Priorities at 4th Annual World Health Care Congress**

### **Improving Global Health**

WOBURN, Mass., April 24 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Millions of people -- most of them children -- die each year in developing countries from diseases that are preventable and treatable. Tragically, little research is done to prevent or cure some of the world's biggest killers, such as malaria and tuberculosis.

Dr. Tadataka Yamada, President of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Global Health Program, discussed these and other insights in a keynote session moderated by Susan Dentzer, on-air correspondent with PBS' The News Hour with Jim Lehrer. Dr. Yamada talked about the Foundation's efforts to help develop lifesaving medical advances (vaccines, drugs and other affordable health solutions) and to ensure they reach the people in greatest need.

Dr. Yamada reviewed several areas that the Gates Foundation's Global Health Program is currently focused on, including infectious diseases, maternal and child health, and malnutrition. He highlighted several key successes in global health over the past few years, including the work of the GAVI Alliance, which has helped prevent 2.3 million deaths by increasing access to children's vaccines in developing countries.

According to an audience poll during the session, (Vision Tree) 66 percent of participants felt that inadequate infrastructure is the leading obstacle to improving health in poor countries, while 17 percent identified cost of vaccines and drugs and 10 percent identified medical staff shortages as the key obstacles. More than half of those polled felt that increased donor support and greater health spending by poor nations would have the greatest impact on global health. Overall, two-thirds of the audience were optimistic about the future of global health.

"It is encouraging to see the optimism among the younger generation around the globe to dedicate themselves to improving health infrastructure and access to treatment in the developing world," said Dr. Yamada. "This enthusiasm is borne from a recognition that all lives, no matter where they are lived, have equal value."

#### **About World Health Care Congress:**

The 4th Annual World Health Care Congress, is the most prestigious thought leadership meeting providing solutions for healthcare quality, consumerism, health IT, access, cost and transparency. The 2007 event convenes over 1,800 CEOs, senior executives and government officials from

the nation's largest employers, hospitals, health systems, health plans, pharmaceutical and biotech companies, and leading government agencies.

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