



Biography of Dr. Sikder M. Zakir

Dr. Sikder M. Zakir founded Telemedicine Reference Center Ltd. (TRCL), the first telehealth technology focused company in Asia in 1999 and now serving as the Managing Director of the company. He graduated in Medicine and Surgery from Sir Salimullah Medical College, Dhaka. Prior to his medical graduation Dr. Zakir completed diploma in Biomedical Sciences from University of Constantine under a Government Scholarship and following medical graduation he received post-graduation training in Recombinant DNA Technology in Long Island University of New York. In addition, he received training in database (Oracle), programming language (C++) and health informatics tools in USA. In 2001, Dr. Zakir established the first international telemedicine system between Bangladesh and Nebraska Health System of USA.

He architected the world's first 24/7 medical call center manned by licensed physicians in Bangladesh. The project named, HealthLine in partnership with Grameen Phone Ltd. is serving over 28 Million mobile phone subscribers and it received GSM Association's Global Mobile Award 2007 in "Best Use of Mobiles for Social and Economic Development" category.

In 2007, Dr. Zakir developed a multinational and multi-linguistic medical call center platform to integrate healthcare information and services for about 12 Million Bangladeshi, Indian, Indonesian, Filipino and Pakistani migrant workers in GCC countries along with their 60 Million family members living in their home countries, the first project has started operation in Singapore to serve 80,000 Bangladeshi workers in Singapore along with their 400,000 family members living in Bangladesh.

In 2009, Dr. Zakir through TRCL implemented Asia's first mHealth program for Diabetic and hypertensive patients in Bangladesh. In partnership with Diabetic Association of Bangladesh through a supporting grant from World Diabetes Foundation, Dr. Zakir has designed and setup mobile phone infrastructure and applications to support 6 Million diabetic patients in Bangladesh by training doctors, equipping them and by establishing 500 rural connected diabetes centers. Recently, TRCL, ICDDR,B and JHSPH (through Future Health Systems group) formed a consortium to establish connected communities of rural doctors (more than 400,000 unlicensed traditional village doctors in Bangladesh), with the aim to ensure standard medical practices, to control and monitor prescription of sensitive drugs, to deliver supervised care by increasing capacity of village doctors, who meet 65% health care needs of the population in Bangladesh. The project is being partially supported by grant from DFID to FHS2 program; major portion of

funding is contributed by TRCL and the project is using Integrated Rural Health Information System (IRHIS) platform designed by Dr. Zakir.

In 2000, he organized formation of the Bangladesh Telemedicine Association (BTA) with leading physicians of Bangladesh and he was elected unanimously, the General Secretary of BTA and Prof. A.K.M. Ruhul Haque – a renowned Orthopedic Surgeon and current Minister for Health and Family Welfare of the Government of Bangladesh was elected President of BTA. Dr. Zakir mediated between ATA and Government of Bangladesh, in 2002 an Agreement for collaboration in the field of Telemedicine signed by Prof. A.Q.M Badruddoza Chowdhury, former President of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh and Dr Rashid Bashshur, then President of ATA.

Dr. Zakir served in the editorial board of “eHealth International Journal” based in London and received Award in 2002 from Nebraska Health System of USA for “Outstanding Contribution to the International Partnership Program of University of Nebraska Medical Center”. Dr. Zakir is also working with BRAC International (one of the largest NGOs in the world) to establish mobile phone based access to health information and services in challenging environment in countries like Sierra Leone, Liberia and Afghanistan, the first mobile health medical call center project has been established in June 2011 in Freetown, Sierra Leone for BRAC West Africa.

Dr. Zakir played a key role in establishment of the first “Masters of Science degree program in Health Informatics” in Bangladesh Institute of Health Sciences (BIHS) under Dhaka University and is working as a member of the faculty of the Department of Health Informatics. Dr. Zakir dedicated 2% annual gross revenue of his company (TRCL) as permanent grant to the department of Health Informatics and his persuasion secured and received a 3 years’ grant from the Rockefeller Foundation for this academic program.