

Greatbatch to start R&D center in Singapore

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Singapore: US-based medical device technology company Greatbatch plans to establish an Active Implantable Medical Device (AIMD) Research and Development Centre in Singapore, the first-of-its-kind in the country. The establishment of this center is a continuation of Greatbatch's medical device strategy and the first step of Asia Pacific strategy to engage in emerging healthcare markets.

"This announcement is another step in the process we began in 2008 to move Greatbatch forward and evolve from not only being an innovative component manufacturer but also being an innovator of complete medical device systems," said Mr Thomas J Hook, president and CEO, Greatbatch.

"Many factors contributed to our decision to establish the first multinational R&D centre for active implantable medical devices in Singapore, including the nation's commitment to developing its biomedical sciences cluster, as evidenced by its strong investment in research organisations. The work being conducted at several national research institutes serves as a perfect complement to Greatbatch and QiG's resident expertise in the design and development of active implantable medical devices."

In 2008, Greatbatch formed a subsidiary, QiG Group, to empower the design and development of new medical devices for its core markets; Cardiovascular, Neuromodulation and Orthopaedics. The QiG group will partner with physicians and other key opinion leaders in Asia Pacific to focus on developing innovative active implantable medical devices. The Greatbatch

Singapore AIMD R&D Centre will leverage "frugal innovation" strategies to develop cost efficient active implantable medical devices and position Greatbatch to capitalise on emerging market business opportunities.

The Greatbatch Singapore AIMD R&D Centre will immediately focus on the design and development of active implantable medical devices to serve the Cardiovascular and Neuromodulation markets. Both are multibillion dollar markets with considerable long-term growth potential.

To serve the cardiovascular market, the company has identified needs in Interventional Procedures, Atrial Fibrillation ablation, MRI Conditional Systems, as well as targeting health conditions related to Cardiovascular Disease with therapies for Obesity and Obstructive Sleep Apnea. To serve the Neuromodulation market, the company is currently developing a Spinal Cord Stimulator called Algostim, which will treat chronic pain in the trunk and limbs.

"The devices that the Greatbatch Singapore AIMD R&D Centre will design and develop are to be tailored to the unique requirements that exist in emerging markets without sacrificing physician and patient benefits," said Daniel Kaiser, PhD., Chief Technology Officer of Greatbatch. "In order to develop such complex systems we'll focus on world class talent with the capabilities to bring these solutions through the development and regulatory stages to serve Asia Pacific and broader worldwide healthcare markets."

The Greatbatch Singapore AIMD R&D Centre will be headed by Kulbir Sandhu, and will come under the direction of Dr. Kaiser. Sandhu has over 15 years of medical device experience in the areas of new product development, programme management and manufacturing transfer. In his most recent position as Senior Director of R&D at St. Jude Medical, Sandhu was responsible for assessing technologies to determine clinical viability, programme risk, and return on investment by working with key opinion leaders and advisory councils. "Mr. Sandhu has the experience and background to lead this effort as we identify clinicians and experts in the region to partner with QiG on our device initiatives," commented Dr. Kaiser.

The Greatbatch Singapore AIMD R&D Centre is a significant development for Singapore's biomedical sector, it is the first R&D centre for active implantable medical devices in Singapore and in Asia.

"We are delighted that Greatbatch has chosen Singapore for its first R&D Centre outside the US, to develop and commercialise medical devices for Asia and global markets. Companies are increasingly looking to growth opportunities in Asia. Singapore is well-positioned as a location for companies to develop the next generation of medical devices due to our strong pool of R&D talent, opportunities for clinicians and industry to collaborate, aggregate and translate regional clinical insights into new ideas," said Mr. Yeoh Keat Chuan, Managing Director of the Singapore Economic Development Board (EDB).

"As Greatbatch focuses on growth in our core business, growth through targeted acquisitions and growth through new, innovative medical devices, this exciting initiative will further allow Greatbatch to bring differentiating technologies to the marketplace while driving greater return for our shareholders," Hook concluded.