ONWARDS & UPWARDS

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THE EBOLA EPIDEMIC has served as a stark reminder that many areas of modern medicine are still decidedly lacking, but as healthcare workers and medical researchers have mobilised to resolve this threat, they have also exemplified the power of ingenuity in the face of adversity. These sentiments were echoed in a speech by the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), Dr Margaret Chan, in which she declared: “Ebola is a tragedy that has taught the world many lessons about how to prevent similar events in the future”. Indeed, for a disease as unpredictable as Ebola, it is crucial that opportunities to develop new treatments are grasped so that history is not allowed to repeat itself.

This issue of International Innovation explores North American efforts to plan for the future of healthcare, both at home and abroad. As well as featuring an array of forward-thinking research projects, we take a top-down approach, presenting some of the government agencies responsible for enacting lasting change in medicine – beginning with an exploration of the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA)’s Center for Drug Evaluation and Research. In an exclusive interview, we talk to the Center’s Director Dr Janet Woodcock, who discusses the organisation’s activities to support the development of new prescription and over-the-counter drugs, bringing novel therapies to market that will improve the health of the nation. As medical research leaders, both the US and Canada have the capacity to foster change in the health status of not only their own people but also the international community. This edition’s profiles of the Public Health Agency of Canada and USAID’s Global Development Lab give a taste of the extensive work being done across these nations to improve health both at home and abroad, not least in contributing to the fight against Ebola.

As ever, the challenges ahead are many and varied, but the scientists, medics and agencies profiled in this issue demonstrate the vital connection between those providing the big ideas and the people responsible for putting them into action. As long as this connection is strong, the future of the world’s health should be a bright one after all.

We are working hard to build a dynamic community, bringing together a diverse range of researchers, funders, policy makers and commercial partners to showcase the very best from across the research spectrum. As ever, do not hesitate to contact us with any feedback, registration enquiries or proposals for our next edition. Finally, if you are not already receiving International Innovation, don’t forget to register free of charge at: www.internationalinnovation.com/join-us/registration. Enjoy the issue!

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