

Gov. Chris Gregoire's remarks
CSIS Global Health summit
Seattle, PATH headquarters
July 29, 2010

Good afternoon, and thank you Chris (Elias) for that introduction.

And congratulations on your new headquarters here – I was unable to come to the grand opening in February because I was working with the Legislature on the state budget, so I think you were the one having more fun that day!

I want to thank Dr. Anne-Marie Slaughter and Dana Hyde from the U.S. State Department for being here ... the commitment shown by President Obama's Administration to global health is not only welcome news for the international community, but important to Washington state, as well.

Thank you to Helene Gayle and William Fallon at the Center for Strategic and International Studies for presenting their report.

And to our guests from "the other Washington," let me say, welcome to Washington state!

I'm glad you could be here today, because when you return home you can tell people – The sun does shine in Washington, I saw it!

Aside from rain, I have learned many Americans know Washington for our innovations – whether they're in music, food, or cutting edge technology.

But to us, it's the spirit of innovation, the belief that we can always find a better way, that makes Washington special.

At one time, Starbucks was a store selling coffee makers and beans in Seattle. But the folks there realized there was money to be made selling the drinks they had been giving away free as samples – and now the whole world knows what a “Frappuccino” is!

Back in the 1970s, two Washington guys wanted to do more with a mail-order computer – so they wrote some software for it. Today Microsoft is many things – a global economic powerhouse, a center for research, an absolute necessity for millions of businesses worldwide – but it's not “micro” anymore!

We can be proud of our famous success stories – they’ve changed the way people live.

But innovation also compliments other important Washington values like partnership and persistence, to create a uniquely rich environment for the people who work every day to save lives.

We’re proud to be home to truly international organizations like the Gates Foundation, which has invested significantly in a global fight against some of the most deadly health threats: malaria, tuberculosis, polio and tobacco use.

We’re providing the people and the ideas that can shape the field, through institutions like Washington State University and the University of Washington’s Department of Global Health.

These institutions and people create a region here unlike any other, where brilliant people and the most advanced research can yield simple, profound results.

Today let me illustrate the power of innovation with our hosts, PATH. More than once, they have proven that innovations at the basic level can improve the health of communities worldwide.

Great ideas are often simple, like Uni-ject, developed at PATH's "idea factory." This technology – built on a basic squeeze bulb -- allows vaccines to be administered worldwide by health workers with less training than you might find in our audience.

Because the vaccine is pre-loaded with the injector, proper dosage is assured. And because the needle can't be reused, the possibility of transmitting diseases like HIV is eliminated.

With literally one move – a squeeze on the Uni-ject – several problems are solved and lives are made better.

PATH also celebrates the Washington values of partnership and persistence. If a medical solution isn't applicable to the culture and real world of the people who need it, it can't succeed. That's why PATH works with local populations, tests and retests its technological solutions.

We apply the power of partnerships here at home, too, through groups like the Washington Global Health Alliance.

The alliance's high school ambassadors program, for example, connects our teachers and students with experts in global health. It gives our young people a personal connection to international efforts against diseases like malaria.

So, why are we putting so much energy into ideas that benefit people on the other side of the globe?

First, it's our responsibility. As Bill Foege said, you never forget the people you let die.

We have been given the tremendous opportunity in this country to improve lives worldwide and we should embrace that privilege.

But, as a governor during the worst recession in 80 years, I also see global health as an opportunity. It's an industry that is growing, will create jobs, and will bring more talented, visionary – and well intentioned – people to our region.

My own interest in protecting people's health goes back to negotiating a national settlement with tobacco companies. We've since used our settlement funds to drive down smoking rates and improve the health of Washingtonians, something many of the groups here work towards internationally.

We went a step further when I advocated creation of the Life Science Discovery Fund in Washington – putting part of our settlement to work developing life-saving advancements in medicine.

Through the fund and other efforts, government can connect the players in our vibrant global health community -- link our research institutions, the private companies that can develop ideas, and our nonprofits, which can put those advancements to work on behalf of humanity.

Today, the Life Sciences Discovery Fund can point to lives saved through programs it has funded.

And across Washington, 72 cities host life science companies and research companies. We have 22,000 jobs directly linked to life sciences, and 55,000 connected to the industry.

Those are good jobs that support our families and communities. They pay twice the average state salary. Those are the types of jobs we need in the fields we need to reinvent ourselves as we emerge from this downturn.

I was proud to establish the Medical Devices Innovation Partnership Zone in Bothell, for example. Today it is home to 2,800 jobs in the industry and an estimated \$2.5 billion in gross revenues for the companies there.

Our medical equipment exports have more than doubled since 2000. Looking solely at China, we see even more dramatic growth for our medical equipment manufacturers: a more than 40-fold increase in the last decade.

Those are goods bought and sold. We can't put a price on the humanitarian and economic value of the work that PATH, the Gates Foundation or others do to prevent diseases and save generations of children in the developing world.

We do know, however, that in a global economy something as common as influenza — the flu — could have a huge economic impact.

We were reminded of that with a close call in the past year with the new strain of the H1N1 virus — an outbreak that became a pandemic.

Imagine the strain on people, systems, government, business, and the economy if the 2009 H1N1 had been “the big one.”

We would have seen a high mortality rate and a need to cancel large events, keep kids home from school, and stay home from work for weeks at a time.

It would have been a double blow: when parents and their children must stay home to protect themselves or the community from a disease outbreak, it also takes shoppers and workers out of the economy.

It would cause a domino-effect that would hit our whole state. And that same toll would be taken in communities all around the world.

Luckily, this particular flu strain didn't do that. In Washington, our state Department of Health worked with federal and local partners. We managed the challenges of a slow vaccine manufacturing process, and rose to the occasion.

Health and Human Services Secretary Sebelius, Homeland Secretary Napolitano, and the CDC also deserve congratulations, for handling this emergency successfully!

It became a test of many of our response plans and systems, with plenty of lessons learned. And it served as a reminder that health is more than an individual concern. It's more than a community concern. It's more than a state or national concern.

Health is a global concern. It affects real lives, and those lives are what make up industries, economies and nations.

As true believers in innovation, Washingtonians know simple new ideas – whether they involve efficient delivery of vaccines or caffeine – can change the world.

And, as the most trade dependent state in the nation, Washington is keenly aware that our success depends on having health partners with which to trade.

But most of all, global health is a field in which our cherished values of innovation, partnership and persistence are perfectly matched to our value of compassion.

Washington is a place where our interest in doing the right thing has also been the smart thing – for our economy, for our community, and for the world.

It is in all our best interests that the people of every nation are cared for and able to contribute to their communities.

So, thank you all for what you do to keep the world healthy. With no economic incentive at all, the work you do is still the right thing to do, because it honors the best in human values.

I look forward to more progress on this front -- new innovations, partnerships and, yes, new business. When any person is spared the ravages of AIDS or malaria, when the children of any village grow up strong, ready to learn, then we all prosper.

Thank you.