

## AMEI'S PROFILE

# PhRMA's Samir Khalil

"THE AMERICAN MIDDLE EAST INSTITUTE IS A FORUM THAT BRINGS TOGETHER ALL PARTIES—AN EXCHANGE OF IDEAS, ENHANCED INTERACTION BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS, UNIVERSITIES AND ALL INTERESTED PARTIES—AT ONE TABLE."

SAMIR KHALIL, PhRMA



Quiet and soft-spoken, Samir Khalil's demeanor offers little hint of his prime assignment as the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) de facto ambassador to the emerging pharmaceutical and biotechnology frontier of the Middle East and Africa. PhRMA's recognition of the region's deepening significance to the global healthcare marketplace resulted in the establishment of a regional hub in Dubai to help key governments in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Algeria and South Africa stay on track to discover and develop life-preserving medicines.

Although born in the Middle East, Samir's nearly three decades in the United States and years spent working for the New Jersey-based international drug manufacturer, Merck, have made Mr. Khalil an invaluable bridge builder between the world of American innovation and a transitioning Middle East marketplace.

"Countries in many emerging markets are looking at growing their knowledge economy, but not by being oil producers or manufacturing hubs," said Mr. Khalil. He continued, "When you look at bio-pharmaceuticals, it's one of the key industries in the knowledge economy."

For Mr. Khalil, PhRMA's strategies in the Middle East are aimed at getting the atmospheric right. "We try to work with them (the governments) to make sure that their environment is conducive to attracting investment."

In advance of Mr. Khalil's October 20, 2015 appearance as Chair of the pharmaceutical panel at the Pittsburgh-based American Middle East Institute's Health-Tech Forum, we asked him to share the same advice he routinely provides Middle East decision makers weighing the risks and opportunities of opening their markets to innovations.

# BRINGING LIFE-SAVING MEDICINE TO THE MIDDLE EAST:

## SAMIR KHALIL'S 6-POINT CHECKLIST

**1. TRANSPARENT REGULATORY SYSTEM:** A country considering opening its doors to innovation must have a highly efficient, transparent regulatory system. Delay does not result in bringing innovative, life-saving medicines to people in need.

**2. REWARD INNOVATION:** A marketplace must decide to recognize and reward innovation. The true price of the medicine can't be weighed in milligrams. The real cost of innovation is the billions spent on research that lead to the creation of a product that improves the lives of people. The commitment to this kind of work must be reflected in pricing and reimbursement policies. As a heavily regulated industry defined by global price controls, this is essential.

**3. PROTECT INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY:** It's critical for a country to commit to respecting and protecting world-class intellectual property rights. That means rejecting any approval of stolen or copied products and protecting the work of their own scientists. Respect will lead to an environment that will encourage home-grown innovation.

**4. NO DISCRIMINATION OR FAVORITISM:** You cannot become a leader in life-saving medicines without ensuring an open market that is free from discrimination and favoritism. It's the principle of true equality between the international innovators and local drug companies.

**5. PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN EDUCATION & PRIVATE SECTOR:** There must be a strong link between education and the private sector. Boston, Massachusetts is a wonderful example of a structured cooperation and collaboration between major university centers and the private sector.

**6. CONTINUAL DIALOGUE:** Finally, there must be a continual dialogue between an innovative industry like pharmaceuticals and the legislative and regulatory bodies that oversee them. This relationship is critical and must be maintained.

For Mr. Khalil, despite its challenges, the Middle East remains a vibrant, welcoming environment that holds great potential for imaginative innovators and opportunity seekers. He believes PhRMA's success in the region means a healthier, more prosperous future. For details on his October appearance at the American Middle East Institute's Health-Tech Forum, visit [AmericanMEI.org](http://AmericanMEI.org).

## LEARN MORE ABOUT THE OCTOBER 20-21, 2015 MID-EAST HEALTH TECH FORUM AT [AMERICANMEI.ORG](http://AMERICANMEI.ORG)



Samir A. Khalil is Executive Director, Middle East & Africa, of Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA), an international trade association that represents the world's leading research-based pharmaceutical companies. In this position, his primary focus is to work with Governments in the Middle East & Africa Region and PhRMA member companies to advance policies in areas such as access to medicines, innovation, healthcare financing, trade, intellectual property rights protection, and other industrial and healthcare policies.

Prior to joining PhRMA in 2013, Samir worked at Merck & Co, Inc. since 1974. During that time, he held several positions including: Executive Director, Public Policy for Asia Pacific, China and Latin America; Regional leader for Policy & External Affairs, Middle East & Africa; and Executive Director, HIV Policy for Europe, Middle East and Africa, where his focus was to drive Merck's initiatives to improve access to HIV/AIDS care and treatment in the developing world. At different times during his service to Merck, Samir was the Managing Director for two Merck subsidiaries in Egypt and Saudi Arabia; and was the Director, Management Operations, Far East Pacific, where he was part of the team in the early nineties that initiated Merck's direct operations and structure in key countries in the Far East Pacific, including, Taiwan & Korea. Samir represented Merck on the Board of Directors of the Merck/Gates/Botswana partnership in Botswana, known as the African Comprehensive HIV/AIDS Partnerships (ACHAP), and chaired the Board of Merck's partnership with the Government of China, known as China - MSD HIV/AIDS Partnership (C-MAP). He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Pharmacy. He can be reached at [SKhalil@phrma.org](mailto:SKhalil@phrma.org).