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Company Spotlight: International Family Office Alliance for Health

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Can you tell us about the mission and vision of the International Family Offices Alliance for Health (IFOAH)? What inspired you to create or join this initiative?

The mission of IFOAH is to provide a platform for Family Offices with an interest in healthcare to connect, build relationships, discuss investment opportunities, and explore potential collaborations on joint initiatives.

This vision emerged from my years of interaction with Family Offices, both informally and professionally, during which I observed a strong appetite for dialogue around shared interests.

As a medical doctor, I naturally found healthcare to be the central topic of these conversations. This inspired me to create IFOAH, which has continued to grow steadily since its inception.

What makes Family Offices different? What should founders looking to raise know about Family Offices?

It is important to understand how Family Offices differ from other types of investors. By definition, Family Offices do not need to raise capital — they already "have the money." This fundamental characteristic has several implications.

First, unlike venture capital firms, they do not need to market themselves to limited partners (LPs). As a result, Family Offices have historically tended to be far more discreet players within the investment ecosystem.

Second, their investments are not constrained by the typical 10-year return-on-investment timeline associated with traditional fund structures. This allows them to be more flexible from a time horizon perspective — a valuable advantage in healthcare, where the path to revenue, particularly in drug development, can be especially long.

Finally, because they do not need to "pitch an investment thesis" when raising capital, as VCs do, Family Offices can be more adaptable in the types of investments they pursue and to which extent they keep supporting portfolio companies in follow-up investment rounds. For all these reasons, Family Offices are often regarded as highly flexible and long-term oriented investors.

A company seeking investment from Family Offices should begin by investigating a few key questions: Does the Family Office invest in healthcare? Is healthcare its primary or exclusive focus? If it has a broader investment scope, who within the Family Office is responsible for reviewing healthcare opportunities? Given the flexibility that Family Offices enjoy in their investment strategies, it is essential for the company to understand the backgrounds of the family members involved. In many cases, a Family Office is established following the successful exit of an entrepreneur who then decides to invest through their own structure. In such instances, the Family Office often continues to invest in sectors closely related to the entrepreneur's prior experience, where they have developed significant expertise.

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This type of investor also tends to be more hands-on — often seeking a board seat and wishing to be actively involved in the company's operations to leverage their knowledge and add value.

In contrast, some Family Offices are less personally involved. They may prefer to invest below the threshold that requires a board seat, remaining more passive with regard to the governance of the invested company, or they may choose to participate as limited partners (LPs) in investment funds rather than investing directly in companies. That said, many Family Offices are flexible and can operate both as direct investors in companies and as LPs in funds.

Finally, the term Multi-Family Office (MFO) refers to a service provider that supports several Single-Family Offices (SFOs) by managing their wealth and investments on their behalf.

In your experience, what trends or opportunities are currently shaping the life sciences investment landscape, and how are family offices uniquely positioned to capitalize on them?

The elephant in the room is artificial intelligence (AI). While it is important to emphasize that AI is a means to an end — ultimately serving to improve patient outcomes or enhance productivity in areas such as care delivery, research and development, and other aspects of healthcare — it has already become an indispensable tool in medical innovation.

Much of the early hype around smartphone applications for direct patient use has faded, as many of these solutions have struggled to demonstrate meaningful improvements in health outcomes, leading to weak or unsustainable business models. By contrast, I see significant opportunities in AI applications that support interventional medicine, particularly in minimally invasive procedures across vascular medicine, surgery, urology, and respiratory care. Medical technologies enhanced with AI-driven imaging, treatment optimization, and patient data analytics will enable substantial advancements in these areas.

Other promising areas where AI is poised to drive major progress in the coming years include in silico drug development — through advances in molecular modelling and PK/PD simulations — as well as diagnostics, where the convergence of AI and pharmacogenomics is expected to greatly accelerate the realization of personalized medicine.

Looking ahead, and how do you see family offices contributing to the growth and transformation of the industry? What role does IFOAH play in this dynamics?

Family Offices are often perceived as a narrow and somewhat opaque segment of the investment community. In reality, they represent a highly diverse group — varying in size, organizational models, investment theses, and geographic focus, among others. Some take an active, hands-on approach with board participation, while others adopt a more passive stance or contract with Multi Family Office services to outsource the management of their deal flow and investments. For innovators, the key is to do their homework before engaging with Family Offices. Thorough research helps tailor the approach to each Family Office's profile, increasing the likelihood of being perceived as a credible and relevant investment opportunity.

At the same time, Family Offices are becoming more proactive in shaping the future of life sciences investment. It is now common for industry conferences to feature Family Office panels, and many Family Offices are joining forces to explore opportunities for collaboration. This is precisely the role of IFOAH. As an alliance dedicated specifically to healthcare, IFOAH provides a platform for its members to discuss opportunities, collaborate on investments, and collectively amplify their impact — helping shape the future of healthcare investment together.