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### Scientists Launch Vaccine Research Foundation

New Foundation will advocate and campaign for increased funding for global vaccine research against infectious diseases, including neglected tropical diseases

PR Newswire

WASHINGTON, June 8, 2011

WASHINGTON, June 8, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- Fourteen leading scientists and advocacy experts in vaccines and infectious diseases have announced the formation of a new international Foundation to advance and accelerate vaccine research and development against infectious diseases. **The Foundation for Vaccine Research** will be headquartered in Washington, DC. The Foundation's mission is to raise global awareness of the need for increased, long-term, flexible funding for vaccine research against HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and other infectious diseases, including neglected tropical diseases, as well as universal vaccines for influenza and a vaccine to avert pandemic influenza. The Foundation's activities will focus on persuading opinion leaders, policymakers inside and outside government, and other decision makers of the benefits and safety of vaccines and the merits of increased investment in vaccine research. The Foundation will seek to mobilize resources internationally and on a large scale to finance vaccine research globally, with a special focus on securing new assets and the development of innovative financing mechanisms. The Foundation will also conduct televised fundraising events and benefit concerts, with 100 percent of publicly donated funds going directly to teams of scientists and their institutions. The Foundation will also engage with the anti-vaccine movement to persuade them of the benefits of vaccines.

The leadership of the new Foundation is comprised of:

- Galit Alter, PhD, Assistant Professor in Medicine, Ragon Institute of Massachusetts General Hospital, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Harvard University; Director, Ragon Institute Imaging Core; Director, Harvard Center for AIDS Research (CFAR) Immunology Core, Boston, USA
- Patrice Debre, MD, PhD, Professor of Immunology, University of Pierre and Marie Curie, Pitie-Salpetriere Hospital, Paris, France
- Jose M. Gatell MD, PhD, Professor of Medicine, Senior Consultant & Head, Infectious Diseases & AIDS Units, Clinical Institute of Medicine & Dermatology, Founder and Co-Director of the Catalan HIV Vaccine Project (HIVACAT), Hospital Clinic de Barcelona, University of Barcelona, Spain
- Peter Hale, Founder, The It's Time Campaign, Washington, DC, USA
- Sylvie Le Gall, PhD, Assistant Professor of Medicine, Ragon Institute of Massachusetts General Hospital, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Harvard University; Director, Ragon Institute Education and Training Platform, Boston, USA
- Ronald C. Desrosiers, PhD, Professor of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics, Harvard Medical School; Director, New England Primate Research Center, Boston, USA
- Willem Hanekom, Professor of Immunology; Co-Director, South African TB Vaccine Initiative (SATVI), Institute of Infectious Disease and Molecular Medicine, University of Cape Town, South Africa
- Professor Gregory Hussey, Deputy Dean: Research, Faculty of Health Sciences; Founder and Director, Vaccines for Africa, University of Cape Town, South Africa
- Paul A. Offit, MD, Chief, Division of Infectious Diseases, Maurice R. Hilleman Professor of Vaccinology, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, USA
- Gregory A. Poland, MD, MACP, FIDSA, Mary Lowell Leary Professor of Medicine, Infectious Diseases, Molecular Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics; Director,

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- Mayo Vaccine Research Group; Director, Translational Immunovirology and Biodefense; Editor-in-Chief, VACCINE; Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN, USA
- Mauro Schechter, MD, PhD, Professor of Infectious Diseases, Head, Projeto Praca Onze, Hospital Escola Sao Francisco de Assis, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- Guillaume Stewart-Jones, PhD, Principal Investigator, Weatherall Institute of Molecular Medicine, University of Oxford, John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford, UK
- Professor Simon Wain-Hobson, PhD, Chief, Molecular Retrovirology, Institut Pasteur, Paris, France
- Robin A. Weiss, PhD, Professor of Viral Oncology, Division of Infection and Immunity, University College London, UK

The Foundation will work with a constellation of partner institutions and other stakeholders around the globe. The Foundation will incorporate the "It's Time Campaign," an advocacy and campaign organization based in Washington, which will become a program of the new Foundation and its main fundraising arm. The Foundation will share offices initially with the Campaign at their headquarters at 601 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW. The Campaign will retain its focus of campaigning for an HIV, TB, and malaria vaccine. The Foundation will advocate for increased funding for vaccine research against all infectious diseases in the belief that all vaccine research is underfunded and that breakthroughs could come from any field.

The Foundation will also finance vaccine research directly. Funding sources will include the It's Time Campaign's internet-based campaign, televised fundraising events, benefit concerts, and other initiatives undertaken by the Foundation. In the case of major televised events, 100 percent of publicly donated funds will go to research, none to overhead costs, with the proceeds distributed worldwide to scientists and their institutions wherever the funds will have the greatest impact in terms of accelerating vaccine research.

**Prevention is better than cure**

Of the billions of dollars spent every year fighting infectious diseases around the world, less than 2 percent is invested in vaccine research. The Foundation believes that this is shortsighted and that we must reset our priorities. "The science and the technology are there to develop life-saving vaccines for the most challenging infectious diseases," said Founding Board Director Dr. Paul Offit of Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and co-inventor of the rotavirus vaccine. "However, the resources are not – and, when they are, they tend to come in bursts. Scientists everywhere need long-term, predictable funding in order to pursue new ideas and promising lines of research without worrying about paying next month's rent."

The Foundation fills a strategic gap at a time when resources are scarce and treatment costs are soaring. "No one has been advocating, lobbying or campaigning single-mindedly or consistently on the world stage for increased funding for vaccine research," said Peter Hale, founder of the It's Time Campaign. "It's time to fill this gap. While finding innovative new ways to persuade governments and other funders of the value of increased investments in vaccine research, we can help raise money for vaccine research by conducting televised fundraising events, just as other groups are doing to accelerate cancer and diabetes research."

"It's an exciting time to advance vaccine research and development to prevent humankind's most wretched diseases," said Founding Board Director Prof. Robin Weiss of University College London. "However, scientists must have the resources. We need leadership and further political commitment worldwide. I am pleased that finally someone will be advocating and campaigning for increased funding for vaccine research."

"Vaccines are most needed for infectious diseases that are ravaging developing countries, where financial incentives for vaccine companies practically do not exist," said Founding Board Director Prof. Mauro Schechter of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. "I hope that the creation of the Foundation will galvanize efforts to create innovative financing mechanisms and other incentives that will expedite vaccine research and development, particularly for HIV, TB, and malaria, in developing and developed countries."

"The personal and communal impact of colliding HIV and TB epidemics in South Africa is devastating," said Founding Board Director, Prof. Willem Hanekom of the South African TB Vaccine Initiative at the University of Cape Town. "We also have an emerging problem of extensively drug-resistant TB. We urgently need to prevent these diseases through effective vaccination. Vaccine development is hampered by inadequate resources; which, in turn, results from suboptimal advocacy efforts. The Foundation has a critical role in reversing this situation."

"The search for an HIV-1 vaccine is the holy grail. Breakthroughs will come, but not from tweaking a variable this way or that," said Founding Board Director Prof. Simon Wain-Hobson of the Institut Pasteur. "We need new ideas – which take time to come – and fresher minds."

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**We must nurture our post-docs and ensure that they have the resources they need.** Good ideas could come from any quarter, even from outside the field."

"Now is the time when **revolutionary, unconventional ideas driven by young investigators may lead to game-changing discoveries** that may provide the key elements required for vaccine design against HIV and other intractable diseases," said Founding Board Director Dr. Galit Alter, an early-career investigator at the Ragon Institute of MGH, MIT and Harvard. "We have renewed energy and momentum following some encouraging recent clinical trial results but we must have the resources to build on these advances."

**"Vaccines have saved millions of human lives, more than any other medical intervention,"** said Founding Board Director Prof. Gregory Poland of the Mayo Clinic and Editor-in-Chief of the journal, VACCINE. "With a sustained 2- to 3-fold increase in funding for vaccine research, I believe that we can eliminate infectious diseases as the primary cause of morbidity and mortality from the planet within our children's lifetime."

**Notes for Editors**

**About the Foundation**

The Foundation for Vaccine Research was incorporated in the District of Columbia on June 1, 2011, after complying with all applicable provisions of the District of Columbia's NonProfit Corporation Act. The Foundation is currently organizing its leadership to prepare for its formal launch and public debut this fall. During the summer months, the Foundation will also be filing for 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status with the Internal Revenue Service. Further details of the Foundation's leadership and its inaugural event will be announced shortly.

**The Foundation's Logo**

**Vaccines are "miracles" that have saved millions of human lives** and will continue to save millions more in the future. For this reason, the Foundation's logo features a large "V" center stage to symbolize the miracles worked by vaccines. The logotype was designed by award-winning typographer and designer Paul Soady in Los Angeles. "Sometimes when designing a logotype magic happens, usually it happens only ONCE in the design process," said Paul Soady. "In the case of 'The FOUNDATION for VACCINE RESEARCH' logotype, the magic happened 5 times! The "V" happens to be the key letter in the key word, "Vaccines." The "V" sits right in the middle of the line. "V" is considered the strongest letter in the Roman alphabet. "V" stands for Victory, thanks to Winston Churchill. "V" is the newest letter in the alphabet, the Romans used U instead." Our thanks to Paul Soady and to fellow Australian designer Chris Davies at Shout Studio in L.A. Paul's logotype design can be viewed on the Foundation's website at: [www.vaccinefoundation.org](http://www.vaccinefoundation.org)

**About the It's Time Campaign**

The It's Time Campaign is an advocacy and campaign organization in Washington, DC, that started as an all-volunteer group of vaccine advocates on Capitol Hill. After hosting and organizing a special Joint Congressional briefing on Capitol Hill on the 30th anniversary of the eradication of smallpox on May 17, 2010, the first briefing of its kind bringing together top scientists engaged in the fields of HIV, TB, and malaria vaccine research, the group was encouraged by its co-sponsors to incorporate as a foundation to take the Campaign further. The event was co-sponsored by Aeras Global TB Vaccine Foundation, Global HIV Vaccine Enterprise, HIV Vaccine Trials Network (HVTN), International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI), Jenner Society, Mayo Clinic, PATH Malaria Vaccine Initiative, U.S. Military HIV and Malaria Vaccine Programs, and Nature. In addition to Washington, the Campaign plans to open offices in Brussels.

SOURCE The Foundation for Vaccine Research

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