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For Immediate Release

Malaria Vaccine Initiative Gets New Leadership

SEATTLE, WA AND ROCKVILLE, MD (30 January 2003) - Program for Appropriate Technology in Health (PATH) today announced the appointments of Drs. Melinda Moree and Filip Dubovsky as Director and Scientific Director, respectively, of the Malaria Vaccine Initiative (MVI). Launched in 1999, MVI seeks to accelerate development of vaccines against malaria—a major infectious disease that kills an estimated 2.7 million people every year. Previous MVI Director Regina Rabinovich, M.D., joined the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation earlier this month as Director of Infectious Diseases, Global Health Program.

Dr. Moree has been with MVI since mid-1999, leading the business development effort, including developing partnership agreements and spearheading a re-examination of the way intellectual property for neglected diseases is handled. Her prior experience includes managing advanced research at a drug delivery system company, technology transfer for a university, and an American Association for the Advancement of Science fellowship. She earned her Ph.D. in Medical Microbiology from the University of Maryland at Baltimore.

As Director, Dr. Moree is now responsible for the overall management, strategic direction, and implementation of MVI.

"I am gratified to be leading a major international effort to develop a vaccine that will help curb the misery caused by malaria, a disease that kills nearly 4000 children every day," said Moree. "The MVI team will continue to work in close partnership with the malaria vaccine community to drive promising vaccine candidates into well-designed clinical trials. Though current malaria control efforts are making a difference, a vaccine is crucial for ending deaths among children."

A pediatrician, infectious disease specialist, and vaccinologist by training, Dr. Dubovsky has guided portfolio management, technology assessment, and project development for MVI since early 2000. In his new role, he is responsible for managing MVI's diverse vaccine development portfolio and providing scientific oversight to MVI's product development teams.

"Malaria remains an under-appreciated epidemic that is becoming progressively difficult to control," said Dr. Dubovsky. "I strongly believe a malaria vaccine is both essential and technically feasible. I look forward to steering the science program to make such life saving vaccines a reality."

In its first three years, MVI initiated nine vaccine development partnerships. All have made significant progress and continue to push forward—some at a faster than expected pace. Four of the partnerships have vaccines in clinical trials. The new position of Scientific Director was created in response to MVI's expanding vaccine development portfolio.

Dr. Christopher Elias, PATH's President, feels "MVI has achieved tremendous progress in its short, three-year history, in large part due to the substantial contributions of Drs. Moree and Dubovsky. Their in-depth knowledge of malaria, vaccine science, and the art of public-private partnership will continue to propel the program forward."

MVI operates primarily through partnerships with academia, government, and biotech and pharmaceutical companies. These partnerships are overcoming technical and financial hurdles to clinical testing of promising vaccine candidates. They are also addressing potential barriers to eventual malaria vaccine introduction, including market-related, intellectual property, and financing issues.

The Malaria Vaccine Initiative (MVI) is a global program established through an initial grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to Program for Appropriate Technology in Health (PATH). MVI's mission is to accelerate the development of promising malaria vaccines and ensure their availability and accessibility for the developing world. MVI's vision is a world where vaccines protect children from death and severe disease caused by malaria. For information, visit www.MalariaVaccine.org.

PATH is an international organization dedicated to developing, implementing, and evaluating innovative solutions to public health problems. PATH's mission is to improve health, especially the health of women and children. Visit PATH's Web site at www.path.org.