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**For Immediate Release**

## **Malaria Vaccine Initiative Receives \$100 Million from Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**

### **New Money Means More Vaccines in Clinical Trials and Sends Strong Message On the Need for Greater Investment in Malaria R&D**

(SEATTLE, WA, USA, 21 September 2003) – The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation will invest an additional US\$100 million in the Malaria Vaccine Initiative (MVI), which, for the past four years, has undertaken a global effort to accelerate the development of malaria vaccines in order to save the lives of over a million children every year.

"This substantial commitment is a vote of confidence in MVI, which has been extremely effective in moving potential malaria vaccines out of the laboratory and into clinical trials," said Christopher Elias, MD, President of Program for Appropriate Technology in Health (PATH), MVI's parent organization. "This award will allow us to build on the current momentum and accelerate us toward our goal of a malaria vaccine that can save children's lives in the developing world."

Since its launch in 1999 with a US\$50 million grant from the Gates Foundation, MVI has established a series of carefully crafted partnerships with pharmaceutical and biotech companies, governments, and research institutions around the world. MVI currently supports the development of 15 malaria vaccine candidates and has been instrumental in moving seven of them into a total of 13 clinical trials. Today more malaria vaccines are moving into clinical trials than ever before.

The infusion of US\$100 million from the Gates Foundation will enable MVI to further speed the drive for a malaria vaccine by moving more vaccines from the laboratory into clinical trials. Difficulties in overcoming this barrier have impeded malaria vaccine development for decades. New funding will allow more of what has been discovered over the past 10-15 years to finally be evaluated in people—currently the only way to know if potential malaria vaccines might work.

"One reason this new grant is so exciting is that it extends our ability to help move the field forward more quickly and systematically. Over a million children die of malaria every year and hundreds of millions of people worldwide suffer cases of malaria," said Melinda Moree, PhD, Director of MVI.

"Vaccines are the most successful public health intervention and one is desperately needed for malaria," continued Moree. "Because the majority of malaria victims who would benefit from a vaccine live in developing countries, industrial involvement has been limited due to the low expected return on investment. A program like MVI helps to bridge this gap and move malaria vaccines forward aggressively with our partners despite this market failure." The first four years of MVI demonstrated that this method of partnering is successful and the next four years will build tremendously on that foundation.

In accepting the generous grant, MVI acknowledges that an effective vaccine is far from imminent. But putting more vaccines into well-designed clinical trials is the only way to move the field forward faster and could lead to a much-needed scientific breakthrough by the end of the four-year grant period and to a licensed vaccine in a decade.

Ultimately, defeating malaria demands aggressive action on multiple fronts. The awards announced by Bill and Melinda Gates today ([www.gatesfoundation.org](http://www.gatesfoundation.org)) reflect the need for a spectrum of research and development activities to meet the challenge of malaria in the short, medium, and long term. Controlling this pervasive disease in Africa, where malaria-carrying mosquitoes can breed in a muddy footprint, requires the simultaneous pursuit of full implementation of currently available tools, better treatment and prevention, and a serious push to provide a vaccine that is accessible to the people who need it most. MVI will do its part in this global effort by working diligently and intelligently over the next several years to move scientists closer to what many consider the holy grail of vaccine science.

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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](http://www.malariavaccine.org).

PATH is an international organization which creates sustainable, culturally relevant solutions that enable communities worldwide to break longstanding cycles of poor health. Through collaboration with diverse public- and private-sector partners, PATH helps provide appropriate health technologies and vital strategies that change the way people think and act. PATH's work improves global health and well-being. Visit PATH's website at [www.path.org](http://www.path.org) for more information.