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FIRST WAVE OF “PEDIATRIC AIDS CORPS” HEADS TO AFRICA TO TREAT AND TRAIN

**YOUNG DOCTORS SET TO MAKE “WORLD OF DIFFERENCE” –
MANY MORE NEEDED**

**COUNTERING “BRAIN DRAIN,” EACH PEDIATRICIAN
CAN PREVENT 1,300 CHILD DEATHS ANNUALLY**

NEW YORK – (November 1, 2005) – They trained to keep children healthy. Now they will take on the toughest of health challenges – treating children with AIDS and training medical workers in parts of the world where pediatricians are scarce and children are dying at an alarming rate. For the young, brilliant physicians who have joined the Pediatric AIDS Corps since its creation in June, it is a mission that will put their medical expertise to the test in populations that are literally dying for their help.

Bristol-Myers Squibb and Baylor College of Medicine in Houston today announced the first wave of the Pediatric AIDS Corps, a joint venture that is sending 250 doctors to Africa over five years to treat children with AIDS and train local medical professionals to do the same. The announcement, made at the TIME Global Health Summit, follows the release of a new study in the *New England Journal of Medicine* showing that the US is a major contributor to African health care’s “brain drain.”

These Bristol-Myers Squibb Fellows will work out of a network of clinics, also run by Baylor and funded by Bristol-Myers Squibb, that provide the medical infrastructure crucial to providing good medical care. Funding of \$22 million from the Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation and \$10 million from Baylor College of Medicine will pay for the doctors’ living expenses and training, and will forgive their medical school loans while they serve in the Corps.

“Incredible Opportunity”

Dr. Kebba Jobarteh is one of the more than 30 members of this new elite humanitarian team. Born in Kenya and raised in New York City, Jobarteh immediately knew the Pediatric AIDS Corps was something he wanted to be a part of. The Yale and Harvard-educated doctor has recently returned from the Botswana-Baylor Children’s Clinical Center of Excellence, which has more than 1,400 children in treatment – the largest concentration of HIV-infected children in care in any center worldwide.

"The AIDS Corps is an incredible opportunity to treat children infected with HIV in those nations most heavily affected by the pandemic," said Jobarteh. "The joint mission of treating kids and training local healthcare workers to care for the children is what I have been working towards for all of these years."

Corps member Laura Guderian, MD of New York City will be going to Botswana in July 2006 as a member of the Corps. She trained in internal medicine at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York City. Her initial encounter with the devastating effects of HIV was as an undergraduate volunteer for Community Hospice of Louisiana.

“During my three years providing respite care for hospice patients, I witnessed overwhelming tragedy and loss endured by individuals and families as a result of AIDS,” said Guderian. “I saw in them incredible strength and courage in the face of suffering and death. The experience inspired me to devote my career to improving the lives of those living with HIV and AIDS.”

Drs. Sarah Kim, a pediatrician from Boston; Ryan Phelps, a pediatrician from San Francisco; and Lineo Thahane, who has been working in Zambia since January 2005, also joined in the announcement.

Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation President John Damonti believes the Corps is a crucial step towards greatly reducing the devastation of global pediatric AIDS, and noted that the children’s clinics are integral to the program. The Foundation estimates that each doctor can prevent 1,300 child deaths annually.

“In this unique program, pediatricians and family practitioners are giving one year or more of their lives to treat children and train professionals in Africa,” said Damonti. “We realize that the Corps is a short-term solution to treatment for children in Africa, but it is an important bridge until local capacity can be developed. So working with our partners at Baylor, we are creating not only a cadre of highly skilled children’s doctors who will ‘treat and train,’ but also a network of children’s clinics to provide the physical infrastructure so critical to the long-term successful treatment of children with HIV/AIDS and their families.”

Bristol CEO calls for more doctors

Noting that each pediatrician in the Corps can have an extraordinary impact on children with AIDS, Peter Dolan, CEO of Bristol-Myers Squibb, called for partners to help fill the clinics with doctors.

“We want to work collaboratively to bring as many pediatricians to Africa as possible to help the thousands of HIV-infected children who will otherwise die from AIDS every week,” said Mr. Dolan. “Bristol-Myers Squibb and Baylor College of Medicine are funding 250 doctors over the next five years, many of whom will work in the network of children’s clinics we are building and staffing in Africa, as well as in more isolated areas devastated by HIV/AIDS. The need is great for additional resources as well, and we have the capacity to accommodate those resources in our clinics and elsewhere, so we welcome commitments by other companies to fund one or more physicians for this specialized corps.”

The Pediatric AIDS Corps is a natural extension of an ongoing partnership between Bristol-Myers Squibb and Baylor College of Medicine. In 1999, Bristol-Myers Squibb and its Foundation launched SECURE THE FUTURE, then a \$100 million commitment to help alleviate the HIV/AIDS crisis among women and children in sub-Saharan Africa. Over the years, the public-private initiative – the first and largest corporate commitment of its kind to fight HIV/AIDS in Africa – has grown in size and scope to encompass more than 200 grants providing medical care and research, infrastructure- and capacity-building and community outreach and education in 10 hard-hit countries in Africa. Today’s commitment is more than \$150 million.

Baylor College of Medicine’s International Pediatric AIDS Initiative has created a global network of clinical centers modeled after two landmark HIV/AIDS care and treatment centers it constructed and opened in Constanta, Romania and Gaborone, Botswana. Its director, Dr. Mark W. Kline, began his academic career in the research and treatment of HIV-infected children in Houston in 1990. With expanded treatment options and more ready access to treatment for US children, he saw dramatic improvements in their outlook.

Fewer than 1 percent of 2.2 million children in treatment

“Fewer than one percent of the world’s 2.2 million children with AIDS are being treated,” Kline said. “Children in the world’s poorest countries continue to fall ill and die from HIV/AIDS in huge numbers, most without the benefit of the therapies that transformed the health of HIV-infected children in the US a decade ago.”

“The Pediatric AIDS Corps addresses a major barrier to treatment of HIV-infected children in Africa; namely, the dearth of pediatric professionals knowledgeable regarding the treatment of the disease,” he continued. “I am especially pleased by the high caliber of the Corps members. They are a rare group of community-minded physicians who are truly following their hearts. In the end, medicine is all about compassion, and this is compassion at its very best.”

Kline’s pioneering efforts in global pediatric AIDS outreach were a natural fit with Bristol-Myers Squibb’s SECURE THE FUTURE. The partnership has led to the creation of the world’s largest children’s HIV clinical treatment center in Botswana. Two additional clinics are scheduled to open in December in Swaziland and Lesotho and two more, in Burkina Faso and Uganda, are scheduled to open next year. In addition to the Africa commitment, programs are funded in Thailand, Vietnam, Mexico, Ukraine and France.

A strategy to fight “brain drain”

Dr. Fitzhugh Mullan, professor of pediatrics at George Washington University Medical Center and chair of the Institute of Medicine’s Committee on the Options for Overseas Placement of US Health Professionals, sees the Pediatric AIDS Corps as an important solution for a growing “brain drain” from lower-income countries that has had an adverse affect on health care, particularly in third world nations. Mullan wrote of this phenomenon, in a recent *New England Journal of Medicine* article, “Foreign-trained doctors constitute approximately 25 percent of the physicians in the US, UK, Canada and Australia. Seventy-five percent of these physicians in the UK and 60 percent in the US come from lower-income countries. The number of physicians leaving a given country compared to the number of physicians remaining to do the work of health care measures the true impact of the brain drain. Calculated in this way, sub-Saharan Africa, the Indian subcontinent and the Caribbean are the leading donor regions of the world, and nine of the top 20 donor countries in the world are small, poor sub-Saharan African and Caribbean nations,” said Mullan.

“Training enough domestic physicians to meet the public’s need in wealthy nations is important to mitigate the brain drain from poor countries. But this will take time,” he added. “The most important immediate-term strategy for combating HIV disease and the brain drain in Africa is the mobilization of more US health professionals to work abroad. The Baylor/BMS Pediatric AIDS Corps is both a building block in this mobilization and a model for others to emulate.”

Bristol-Myers Squibb is a global pharmaceutical and related health care products company whose mission is to extend and enhance human life.

Baylor College of Medicine is one of the nation’s top academic health sciences centers and is committed to advancing human health through the integration of patient care, research, education and community service.

The TIME Global Health Summit will inform and engage Americans from all sectors on the international challenges to public health – and what they can do to help. The TIME Summit will highlight solutions to such challenges as AIDS, avian flu, malaria and the shortage of health-care professionals. The summit brings together non-profit, government, faith and corporate leaders like Bill Clinton, Bill Gates, Dr. Julie Gerberding, Jeff Sachs, Ann Veneman, Rick Warren and Paul Wolfowitz.

Note to photo editors: photos available at http://www.securethefuture.com/media/data/pic_gallery.html when embargo lifts.

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