

Research Institute Launched in South Africa

HHMI PARTNERS WITH LEADERS AND SCIENTISTS IN SOUTH AFRICA TO FIGHT THE DUAL EPIDEMICS OF TB AND HIV.



WITH SIMULTANEOUS EVENTS IN THE UNITED STATES AND SOUTH Africa, HHMI and the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) announced the creation of an international research center focused on making major scientific contributions to the worldwide effort to control the devastating co-epidemic of tuberculosis (TB) and HIV. The center also aims to train a new generation of scientists in Africa.

“This initiative adds a new dimension to HHMI’s commitment to international research,” said Thomas R. Cech, then president of HHMI, at the March 19 press conference in downtown Washington, D.C. “This cross-Atlantic partnership reflects a shared view that direct and substantial investment in basic, clinical, and translational research in the heart of the pandemics of HIV and TB will yield significant discoveries that will alleviate the human suffering caused by these diseases.”

Construction of the KwaZulu-Natal Research Institute for TB and HIV (K-RITH) on the campus of the Nelson R. Mandela School of Medicine in Durban is expected to begin this fall. HHMI will provide \$20 million toward construction of a six-story facility that will include two floors of high-level biosafety (BSL-3) laboratories equipped for TB research. Additional support will come from

UKZN and LIFE Lab, a biotechnology center of the government of South Africa. HHMI has also committed to providing generous research support to K-RITH for the next 10 years.

“This initiative signifies an important milestone in the strengthening of global partnerships in the fight against communicable diseases,” said His Excellency Welile Nhlapo, the South African Ambassador to the United States. “The world needs robust, practical, affordable, and sustainable solutions to the problems of HIV-AIDS and tuberculosis. South Africa is well positioned to help develop them.”

South Africa has more residents infected with HIV than any other nation in the world. By 2007, the nation accounted for 17 percent of the global HIV disease burden—an estimated 5.4 million people are infected—and it has one of the highest per capita rates of TB in the world. TB, a major problem in pre-AIDS South Africa, emerged as a public health crisis in its own right, particularly with the appearance of both multidrug-resistant and extensively drug-resistant (XDR) strains of TB in persons already infected with HIV.

KwaZulu-Natal province, home to more than 10 million people, bears an even greater burden of disease than the nation as a whole—as much as 40 percent of the population may be positive for HIV. When an outbreak of XDR-TB was reported in the rural area of Tugela Ferry in 2006, the region became a focus of international concern even as additional cases of XDR-TB surfaced elsewhere in the world.

“We are embarking on a scientific journey together,” said Professor Malegapuru William Makgoba, UKZN’s vice chancellor.

LEFT (left to right): Malegapuru William Makgoba, University of KwaZulu-Natal; William R. Jacobs, Jr., Albert Einstein College of Medicine; Adriaan Willem Sturm, Nelson R. Mandela School of Medicine; Salim S. Abdool Karim, University of KwaZulu-Natal; Bruce D. Walker, Massachusetts General Hospital. RIGHT (left to right): Malegapuru William Makgoba; Welile Nhlapo, South African Ambassador to the United States; Thomas R. Cech.

“There is no better place on the planet to undertake TB and HIV research, in part because there are more people in South Africa with HIV than any other country in the world. By focusing on the twin epidemics of HIV and TB, we are taking on the most challenging global health challenge.”

The scientific journey is already under way. HHMI awarded seed grants totaling more than \$1.1 million in 2008 to scientists in the United States and South Africa. This year, the Institute will provide an estimated \$3 million in grant funding and support for construction of temporary laboratory facilities for the TB research program. The initial effort will focus on the diagnosis, pathogenesis, treatment, and prevention of TB in the context of HIV.

The commitments by HHMI and UKZN go beyond the financial. Two leading HHMI investigators with long-standing expertise in TB and HIV research will participate actively in the program: William R. Jacobs, Jr., of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, and Bruce D. Walker, of the Massachusetts General Hospital, who

directs the HIV Pathogenesis Program in Durban, a joint initiative of Harvard University and UKZN. Walker also directs the newly formed Ragon Institute, which will focus on developing a vaccine against HIV. UKZN scientists helping to direct and plan K-RITH are A. Willem Sturm, a noted TB researcher and dean of the Mandela School of Medicine, who serves as K-RITH’s interim director, and Salim S. Abdool Karim, UKZN Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) and director of the Center for the AIDS Program of Research in South Africa.

“K-RITH will leverage HHMI’s deep experience in fundamental research and its financial resources with UKZN’s own programs in HIV and TB research in the context of ongoing efforts to manage HIV and TB in KwaZulu-Natal,” said Cech. “K-RITH scientists will have an unparalleled opportunity to collaborate with their colleagues at clinical sites in and around Durban in research efforts that focus on the diagnosis, pathogenesis, treatment, and prevention of TB and HIV.” ■

Rose Elected to HHMI Board of Trustees



CLAYTON S. ROSE, A SENIOR lecturer at the Harvard Business School and 20-year veteran of J.P. Morgan & Co., has been elected a Trustee of HHMI. He becomes one of 10 Trustees of the Institute, a medical research organization dedicated to the discovery and dissemination of new knowledge in the life sciences.

Rose, 50, will become chair of the Trustee Committee on Audit

and Compensation in November, succeeding Kurt Schmoke, Dean of the Howard University School of Law. He will also serve as a member of the Finance Committee.

At Harvard, Rose teaches a first-year course on “Leadership and Corporate Accountability” and a second-year course called “The Moral Leader.” He is at work on a project examining the challenges facing general managers in the financial services industry in light of the economic and financial crisis, has undertaken case studies of several affected firms, and will offer a new course on the subject in the fall of 2009. He has also taught at the Columbia University

Graduate School of Business and the Leonard N. Stern School of Business at New York University.

Rose held a number of senior management roles during his tenure at J.P. Morgan, where he headed the Global Investment Banking and Global Equities divisions and served as a member of its executive committee. After the merger of J.P. Morgan with the Chase Manhattan Bank in 2001, Rose was vice chairman and chief operating officer of the J.P. Morgan Chase investment bank. He also helped found J.P. Morgan’s equity business, represented it during the negotiations that followed the collapse of the hedge fund Long Term Capital Management in 1998, and led a firm-wide diversity initiative.

Rose chairs the board of managers of Highbridge Capital Management, a hedge fund in which J.P. Morgan holds a majority stake. He also serves as a trustee of the National Opinion Research Center, a widely respected social science research organization based at the University of Chicago.

Rose earned a bachelor’s degree and a master’s in business administration from the University of Chicago. In 2007, he received a Ph.D. in sociology (with distinction) from the University of Pennsylvania with a dissertation that focused on how companies manage the racial composition of boards and senior management teams. ■