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BD and PEPFAR Collaborate to Strengthen Laboratory Systems in Fight Against HIV/AIDS and TB

Public-Private Partnership Valued up to \$18 Million over Five Years

WASHINGTON and FRANKLIN LAKES, N.J., Oct. 31 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (Emergency Plan/PEPFAR) joined BD (Becton, Dickinson and Company) to announce the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding today to establish a public-private partnership to improve overall laboratory systems and services in African countries severely affected by HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis (TB).

PEPFAR is the largest international health initiative ever undertaken by a single country. Under the Emergency Plan, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is the lead implementing agency for strengthening laboratory systems. BD is a leading global medical technology company with technical expertise relating to laboratory systems. Today's formation of a public-private partnership between these organizations is the first of its kind, and will accelerate progress to build key health care infrastructure in Emergency Plan focus countries.

"I applaud the work of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and BD in coming together to form this public-private partnership. By joining hands in our individual efforts to help host nations develop robust laboratory facilities, we will maximize the effect our limited resources can have," HHS Secretary Mike Leavitt said. "This is exactly the kind of partnership that can produce sustainable improvements, and I hope many such partnerships will follow."

"By joining forces with private sector companies like BD and working in partnership with host nations, we will achieve more in the fight against HIV/AIDS and TB together than we can alone," said Ambassador Mark Dybul, U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator. "PEPFAR supports national health authorities and non-governmental organizations - including local faith-and community-based organizations - that can reach people in need. One of the greatest benefits of this partnership is the potential it has to transform and integrate laboratory and health systems in our host countries."

"Our experience in sub-Saharan Africa has taught us that fragile healthcare systems are among the root causes inhibiting expansion of treatment access for people living with HIV/AIDS and TB," said Gary Cohen, Executive Vice President, BD. "This unique public-private partnership between PEPFAR and BD enables us to apply our collaborative knowledge, expertise and resources toward strengthening health systems in the region, focused on improving laboratory testing capabilities."

This five-year public-private partnership, valued at up to \$18 million, will focus on five primary areas:

- Supporting country-specific programs working on the ground to develop overarching integrated laboratory systems, services, and quality improvement strategies
- Improving the quality of laboratory diagnostics critical to the management of HIV/AIDS patients through training health personnel;
- Implementing quality-control and quality-assurance guidelines and supervisory tools for hematology, chemistry, CD4 testing and rapid HIV testing;
- Strengthening TB reference sites to serve as centralized training facilities; and
- Improving access to TB diagnostics for HIV-positive patients.

Accurate diagnosis is essential for successfully treating and preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS and other diseases. Laboratory settings in developing countries often lack resources and qualified health workers and have inadequate access to training for existing health workers. The partnership between BD and PEPFAR will support training and improved diagnostic capabilities critical to the management of HIV/AIDS patients.

The link between TB and HIV/AIDS is a significant global health problem. In addition to improving laboratory capacity for HIV/AIDS testing and monitoring, BD and PEPFAR will work to advance TB diagnostic capabilities in sub-Saharan Africa. Specifically, the partnership will focus on improving training materials and practices on the diagnosis and management of people living with HIV/AIDS who are co-infected with TB.

Activities in the BD/PEPFAR collaboration will primarily be implemented through country-specific programs in Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Malawi, Mozambique, and South Africa and short-term technical assistance to provide training for all levels of service. BD and PEPFAR will work on the ground with Ministries of Health, National Reference Laboratories and implementing partners to expand high-quality laboratory services based on a National Laboratory Strategic Plan. For example, in South Africa, the collaboration will enable the new regional training laboratory to double the number of trainings offered to all PEPFAR-supported countries in Africa. This regional laboratory will also be able to significantly expand the number of health care workers trained to provide quality HIV testing. By enabling expanded counseling and testing efforts, more Africans will know their status, benefit from appropriate prevention counseling, and receive referrals for life-saving treatment. In the first year alone, it is estimated that this public-private partnership will allow PEPFAR to increase laboratory capacity 15-20% over current levels.

About PEPFAR

The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief employs the most diverse prevention, treatment and care strategy in the world, with an emphasis on transparency and accountability for results. The goals of the Emergency Plan's first five years include support for treatment for two million HIV- infected people, support for prevention of seven million new infections, and support for care for 10 million people infected or affected by HIV/AIDS. On May 30, 2007 President George W. Bush proposed that Congress reauthorize PEPFAR for five additional years and 30 billion additional dollars, which would bring the American people's 10-year commitment on global HIV/AIDS to more than \$48 billion. For more information about PEPFAR, please visit www.PEPFAR.gov.

About HHS/CDC

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Global AIDS Program (GAP), is the lead implementing

agency for strengthening laboratory systems in PEPFAR. HHS, through CDC, helps resource-constrained countries prevent HIV infection; address health systems to improve treatment, care, and support for people living with HIV; and build technical and human capacity and infrastructure to address the global HIV/AIDS pandemic in a comprehensive public health manner. For more information, please visit www.cdc.gov/gap.

About BD

BD, a leading global medical technology company that manufactures and sells medical devices, instrument systems and reagents, is dedicated to improving people's health throughout the world. BD is focused on improving drug therapy, enhancing the quality and speed of diagnosing infectious diseases, and advancing research and discovery of new drugs and vaccines. The Company's capabilities are instrumental in combating many of the world's most pressing diseases. Founded in 1897 and headquartered in Franklin Lakes, New Jersey, BD employs approximately 28,000 people in approximately 50 countries throughout the world. The Company serves healthcare institutions, life science researchers, clinical laboratories, industry and the general public. For more information, please visit www.bd.com.

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