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BD and PEPFAR Collaboration Will Improve Blood-Drawing Practices in Hospitals and Clinics in Sub-Saharan Africa

BLOOD COLLECTION SAFETY PROTECTS PATIENTS AND HEALTH WORKERS

FRANKLIN LAKES, N.J., Aug. 11 /PRNewswire/ -- BD (Becton, Dickinson and Company), a leading global medical technology company, and the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) today announced a joint initiative to help protect health workers and patients in African countries by improving blood collection safety in clinics and hospitals.

In recent years, safer blood collection has become more critical than ever in sub-Saharan nations and other developing countries severely impacted by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Access to HIV treatment in developing countries has significantly increased in recent years, which in turn has greatly expanded the quantity of blood drawing for HIV screening and monitoring tests.

"Doctors, nurses and other health workers in countries with high infectious disease prevalence face a constant risk of contracting HIV/AIDS and other diseases in their work environment. In particular, blood drawing and other procedures involving blood and sharp devices must be done as safely as possible to protect health workers," said Gary Cohen, Executive Vice President, BD. "Far too few clinicians are currently available to support health needs in sub-Saharan Africa, and all efforts to improve procedures and protect health workers will serve to strengthen fragile health systems in developing countries. BD is very pleased to collaborate with PEPFAR on this essential initiative."

The three-year initiative -- which may be extended up to two additional years -- is scheduled to begin in October in Kenya and expand to include up to four additional PEPFAR-supported countries. It will ultimately support in-service training for as many as 10,000 healthcare workers. When fully implemented, the monitoring component of the initiative aims to track as many as two million blood draws within each participating country.

"A critical role of international development partners such as PEPFAR is to develop and support national leadership," said Ambassador Eric Goosby, U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator. "PEPFAR is proud to partner with BD to invest in health systems strengthening and health worker capacity-building for safe blood collection. Efforts like these build the capacity of partner countries, support the scale up of proven HIV interventions, and ultimately help create a sustainable response to HIV/AIDS."

The program will help hospital and clinical personnel improve their blood-drawing procedures and specimen handling, processes that are critical to the proper management of HIV/AIDS patients. The initiative will also work to control exposure to the virus among health workers by providing post-exposure prophylaxis. In addition, the program will help prevent

needlestick injuries by establishing or enhancing needle stick injury surveillance. These monitoring measures can identify practices that pose risks to health workers and patients.

According to the International Health Care Worker Safety Center at the University of Virginia, injuries from needles filled with blood present a far higher risk of spreading disease than needles used for injections.

Reflecting PEPFAR's focus on empowering developing nations in the battle against HIV/AIDS, Ministries of Health in participating countries will take the lead in developing individualized policies, guidelines and standard operating procedures for blood drawing and specimen handling.

The safe blood collection initiative announced today will be implemented by PEPFAR through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. As part of their collaboration, PEPFAR and BD will work on the ground with Ministries of Health, national reference laboratories and various implementing partners.

BD and PEPFAR are also collaborating on two other programs aimed at improving the healthcare systems of sub-Saharan Africa:

- In October 2007, BD and PEPFAR launched a five-year initiative to improve the quality of laboratories in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- In October 2008, BD, PEPFAR and the International Council of Nurses announced a three-year, public-private partnership to establish a new Wellness Centre for Healthcare Workers(R) in Kampala, Uganda.

About PEPFAR

The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) was launched in 2003 to combat global HIV/AIDS, and is the largest commitment by any nation to combat a single disease in history. Under PEPFAR, the U.S. Government has already committed more than \$25 billion to the fight against global HIV/AIDS. As of September 30, 2008, PEPFAR supported life-saving antiretroviral treatment for more than 2.1 million men, women and children living with HIV/AIDS, compassionate care for more than 10 million people affected by HIV/AIDS, including more than 4 million orphans and vulnerable children, and prevention of mother-to-child transmission programs that allowed nearly 240,000 babies to be born HIV-free. For more information, please visit www.PEPFAR.gov.

About BD

BD is a leading global medical technology company that develops, manufactures and sells medical devices, instrument systems and reagents. The Company is dedicated to improving people's health throughout the world. BD is focused on improving drug delivery, enhancing the quality and speed of diagnosing infectious diseases and cancers, and advancing research, discovery and production of new drugs and vaccines. BD'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, the pharmaceutical industry and the general public. For more information, please visit www.bd.com.

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