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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Life Science Washington Institute selected to accelerate innovation for U.S. health security, daily medical care

SEATTLE, Washington – The Life Science Washington Institute of Seattle has been selected as one of eight accelerators in the nation by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to drive innovation in lifesaving medical technologies that solve challenging problems spanning modern health security threats and daily medical care.

Deaths from flu and sepsis in the U.S. claim precious lives each year. In fact, an estimated 35.6 million cases of the flu are reported and claim the lives of 56,000 people annually and sepsis results in one million deaths every four years, according to HHS.

A new HHS unit called DRIVE – part of the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) at the HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response – will oversee the accelerator network and is recruiting a nonprofit partner that can work with private investors to fund innovative technologies and products to solve these and other systemic health security challenges. DRIVE also can invest in the projects using quick, streamlined funding methods.

The partnership between BARDA’s DRIVE program and Life Science Washington Institute will help entrepreneurs find solutions to public-health emergencies – everything from flu pandemics to biological attacks and nuclear incidents.

Addressing BARDA’s new innovative approach at the launch of DRIVE, U.S. Deputy Secretary for Health and Human Services Eric Hargan said, “Accelerators are part of a new business-friendly approach. This approach will help startups and other businesses shape the next generation of lifesaving technology and transform health security. That innovation is crucial to protecting Americans.”

Life Science Washington Institute received approximately \$100,000 in a DRIVE grant to serve as an accelerator.

“Life Science Washington Institute is thrilled to have been selected as one of eight inaugural accelerators for the BARDA DRIVe network,” said Dr. Francisco R. Velázquez, Executive Director of Life Science Washington Institute. “Extraordinary strengths in global health and infectious disease research combined with decades of successfully commercializing breakthrough diagnostics, therapies and medical devices make Washington state the ideal hub for helping to bring innovations in health security to the market faster.”

To assist startups and other businesses in developing their technologies and products, accelerators will connect them with essential product development and business support services. This support could position innovative technologies and products for follow-on investment from the public or private sectors.

“At a time when artificial intelligence and personalized medicine are not just conceivable but attainable, the time is uniquely now to solve some of the most daunting, far-reaching health security problems,” said Rick Bright, BARDA director.

Bright added that with the accelerators, startups and other businesses have a new pathway to bring ideas together, nurture them with experienced partners, and direct them to BARDA’s experts who have demonstrated success in partnering with private industry to take new ideas to regulatory approval.

Other business accelerators named to the DRIVe Network are located in California, Louisiana, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Texas. More information about DRIVe is available at www.drive.hhs.gov.

ABOUT LIFE SCIENCE WASHINGTON INSTITUTE

Life Science Washington Institute is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that assists life science researchers, entrepreneurs, and companies in bridging the gap between discovery and commercialization. Our mission is to provide support to life science entrepreneurs and start-up companies via educational, economic and other resources crucial for their success. Our goal is to ensure life science entrepreneurs continue to have access to the mentoring and resources they require to start and grow their companies.

As part of the BARDA DRIVe Accelerator, we anticipate being able to leverage our existing strengths in entrepreneurial support, education, and mentoring to enhance access to downstream investors, corporate and strategic partners, and other essential services for innovators developing health security technologies.

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