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VGTI Florida Launches the Center for Diseases of Aging to Develop Innovative Treatments for a Broad Range of Difficult-to-Treat Diseases

- *Florida residents to be among first to benefit from the State of Florida's \$3 million investment establishing the CDA as newest addition to the "Research Coast"*

PORT ST. LUCIE, Fla. – October 13, 2014 – The Vaccine & Gene Therapy Institute of Florida (VGTI Florida), a leading, non-profit biomedical research institute, today announced the launch of its Center for Diseases of Aging ("CDA"), a major initiative to accelerate the discovery and advancement of novel, best-in-class healthcare interventions for the prevention and treatment of diseases commonly associated with aging. The CDA's research teams will collaborate with medical scientists from Sweden's world-renowned Karolinska Institutet on programs targeting infectious disease, cancers, neurodegenerative conditions, cardiovascular disease, metabolic disorders and related projects designed to boost overall immunity and vitality in the aging and elderly. Karolinska Institutet is perhaps best known internationally for its Nobel Assembly annually awarding the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine.

"The CDA will be a platform for VGTI Florida to work side by side with world-class scientists to discover innovative healthcare solutions with a focus on precision and personalized medicine. Our mission is to enhance the longevity, health and quality of life for the citizens of Florida - and ultimately for aging populations throughout the world," explained VGTI Florida's President and Director, Richard Jove, Ph.D.

Made possible by a \$3 million investment allocated by the State of Florida in the 2014/2015 budget, the CDA leverages VGTI Florida's core competencies in developing genome-based approaches for the treatment of infectious disease and cancers, and adds new disciplines in the development of cell-based therapies that target a broad range of diseases that typically impact elderly populations. This includes next-generation approaches to finding cures through the use of regenerative medicine and personalized immunotherapies. Medical researchers from Karolinska Institutet are now establishing laboratories on site at VGTI Florida at the Tradition Center for Innovation.

Karolinska Institutet's Dean of Research, Professor Hans-Gustaf Ljunggren, M.D., Ph.D., discussed the value of combining respective research synergies with scientists at VGTI Florida, "Our scientific strengths are highly complementary. By collaborating closely, we can make greater and faster progress in advancing new and better approaches to treating the diseases of aging. Over the course of our 204-year history, Karolinska Institutet's scientists have contributed to many of humankind's most important medical breakthroughs. The CDA represents our continued commitment to share knowledge and co-develop new medicines through important international partnerships."

Some of the innovative discoveries to be initially advanced at the CDA will include: personalized cancer vaccines to prevent recurrence of breast and ovarian cancers; novel T-cell therapies

targeting malignant melanoma and other solid tumors; regenerative approaches to restore heart muscle and tissue following cardiovascular events; and next-generation anti-viral vaccines to boost immunity in the aging, including the development of a universal flu vaccine capable of protecting against any strain of influenza.

Florida Senator Joe Negron applauded the launch of the CDA and welcomed researchers moving from Sweden into VGTI Florida's 100,000 square foot, award-winning research laboratories, "This is a major development for the 'Research Coast' in bringing such acclaimed scientists from Karolinska as new members of our community. The economic impact on our area will be important, including the many opportunities that will be generated with our other local research institutes, universities and hospitals. Floridians will also be among the first to benefit by having access to new therapies that could emerge as future standards-of-care, as these personalized medicines will be evaluated in local clinical trial programs. The ultimate implications for improved global healthcare should be enormous," said Senator Negron.

VGTI Florida's Dr. Jove added, "We are very grateful to the Florida Legislature and Governor Rick Scott for recognizing the impact that the CDA will have, locally and globally. Florida's elected leadership continues to take the actions necessary to grow the life sciences in our state, and we especially thank those legislators who personally championed the CDA including Senator Joe Negron, Representative Matt Hudson, Representative Gayle Harrell, Representative Larry Lee, Congressman Patrick Murphy, Senator Denise Grimsley and Representative MaryLynn Magar. With continued commitment, investment and support, we will further strengthen the quality of best-in-class biomedical research occurring right here in Florida."

"Based on the Legislature's long-term vision, the past ten years have been transformational for the Florida healthcare sector with some of the best medical researchers in the world relocating to our state, committed to eradicating the diseases that devastate families. The CDA is another example of the life science clusters being created and the high-impact jobs and educational opportunities that are resulting," lauded Representative Matt Hudson.

About Karolinska Institutet:

Karolinska Institutet is based in Stockholm, Sweden and is one of the world's leading medical universities, accounting for over 40% of the medical academic research conducted in Sweden. The University offers Sweden's broadest range of education in medicine and health sciences. Since 1901, the Nobel Assembly at Karolinska Institutet has annually selected the Nobel laureates in Physiology or Medicine. For more information, please visit: <http://ki.se/en/startpage>

About the Center for Diseases of Aging at VGTI Florida:

The Vaccine & Gene Therapy Institute of Florida (VGTI Florida) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) biomedical research institute that is positioned for its next stage of growth with the launch of the Center for Diseases of Aging (CDA). The CDA is a joint mission with researchers from Sweden's Karolinska Institute (KI), known for awarding the Nobel Prize in Medicine or Physiology annually. This initiative was made possible by a \$3 million follow-on investment by the State of Florida and will accelerate the advancement of VGTI Florida's core competencies in developing genome-based approaches that target the treatment of infectious disease, cancers, neurodegenerative conditions, cardiovascular disease and metabolic disorders using next-generation approaches such as regenerative medicine and personalized immunotherapies. For more information, please visit: www.vgtifi.org

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