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NIH News

National Institutes of Health
Public Health Service
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

FOR RELEASE:
February 17, 1994

R. Anne Thomas
(301) 496-5787

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FEB 16 1994

Harold Varmus, M.D., Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), today announced his appointment of William Paul, M.D., as the new director of the legislatively reconstituted Office of AIDS Research (OAR) at NIH. Dr. Paul, an internationally recognized immunologist, is currently Chief of the Laboratory of Immunology at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), a component of the NIH.

"Dr. Paul is a superb scientist who will bring fresh perspectives to the already substantial NIH efforts against AIDS," said Dr. Varmus.

"Legislation has conveyed significant new responsibilities to this position, including setting directions for NIH's \$1.3 billion AIDS research budget," said Dr. Varmus. "I am confident that Dr. Paul has the scientific acumen and leadership qualities needed to reevaluate and shape our approach to AIDS and ensure we are doing all we can to combat it," he said.

"Dr. Paul's scientific credentials and personal qualities make him an ideal OAR director, a position that will require him to work well with the directors of NIH's research components, the AIDS research community here and abroad, AIDS interest groups, and high-level policy makers." He will also work closely with Kristine Gebbie, the National AIDS Policy Coordinator.

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In addition to being director of the OAR, Dr. Paul will be the NIH Associate Director for AIDS Research. As prescribed by law, the primary activities of the OAR are to develop a strategic plan for the NIH-wide AIDS research effort, to coordinate AIDS research activities across the 21 NIH components conducting and supporting AIDS research, and to develop consolidated budget estimates.

Dr. Paul will also oversee a national advisory council, which will be established soon, and administer a discretionary fund to take advantage of unanticipated scientific opportunities or approach unexpected public health challenges through research.

Dr. Paul, a uniformed officer in the PHS Commissioned Corps, has been recognized for his scientific contributions here and internationally. His distinguished scientific career has been documented through his election to the National Academy of Sciences in 1982, to the Institute of Medicine in 1990, and to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1993. He received a Distinguished Service Medal from the Public Health Service in 1985, the 3M Life Sciences Award of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology in 1988, and the Duke University Award for Excellence in Immunologic Research in 1993. Dr. Paul has been president of the American Association of Immunologists (1986-87) and of the American Society for Clinical Investigation (1980-81).

Dr. Paul's research emphasis is on the immune system--the target organ for the AIDS virus--with special focus on how

- 3 -

cytokines are produced and how they function. He is the author of over 400 scientific papers, many of which are landmarks in this field, and is particularly known for the discovery of interleukin-4 (IL-4). Dr. Paul has been chief of NIAID's Laboratory of Immunology since 1970. He came to the NIH first as a clinical associate in the National Cancer Institute (1962-1964) and later as senior investigator in the Laboratory of Immunology (1968-1970). In the interim (1964-1968) he was a research fellow and instructor at New York University School of Medicine.

Dr. Paul served his internship and residency in medicine at Massachusetts Memorial Hospitals (1960-1962). He holds a medical degree from State University of New York, Downstate Medical Center, College of Medicine, Brooklyn, NY (1960), and an A.B. degree from Brooklyn College (1956).



For Immediate Release:
February 16, 1994

Contact: Spencer Cox
(212) 924-3934

FEB 16 1994

**TREATMENT ACTION GROUP (TAG) PRAISES APPOINTMENT OF
NIH AIDS RESEARCH DIRECTOR**

The Treatment Action Group (TAG), a New-York based AIDS treatment activist organization, welcomed the Clinton Administration's appointment of Dr. William E. Paul as Director of the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) Office of AIDS Research (OAR). In particular, the activists singled out Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala, and NIH Director Harold Varmus for providing new, dynamic leadership to strengthen the nation's AIDS research programs.

Last year, Congress passed legislation centralizing authority over NIH AIDS research programs in the Office of AIDS Research. The legislation grew out of a TAG analysis of NIH AIDS research programs, entitled AIDS Research at the NIH: A Critical Review, written by TAG members Gregg Gonsalves and Mark Harrington and published in July 1992.

Mr. Harrington said, "For a long time now, AIDS research has desperately needed to apply the insights of fundamental immunology in order to understand the pathogenesis of AIDS and to develop effective drugs and vaccines. We welcome the appointment of Dr. Paul, a world-class immunologist, to take the helm of the national AIDS research agenda."

The legislation, sponsored by Senator Edward Kennedy and Congressman Henry Waxman, reshaped the administration of AIDS research at the NIH, by strengthening OAR's authority to plan, coordinate and budget AIDS activities at the NIH's 21 institutes. TAG led a broad coalition of activists and scientists to guide the legislation through Congress. The AIDS provisions of the NIH Revitalization Act of 1993, which was passed by Congress last spring and signed by President Clinton on June 10, 1993, include:

- * The \$1.3 billion NIH AIDS budget will be disbursed directly to the OAR, for distribution to the 21 institutes.
- * The AIDS research budget became a "bypass budget," like that of the National Cancer Institute. A "bypass budget" request goes directly to the President, "bypassing" the NIH bureaucracy.
- * The OAR will develop an annual strategic research plan, focusing on the highest scientific priorities and plans for implementation;
- * The strategic plan for AIDS research will be tightly linked to the annual budget.
- * The OAR Director will be given a \$100 million discretionary fund to finance high-priority research projects.

(MORE)

- * The OAR Director will be given a new, high-profile advisory council, including AIDS activists, to guide planning and budgeting.

Mr. Gonsalves said, "We expect that this remarkable first step will be matched by an enduring commitment by HHS and the NIH to fully implement the OAR reforms, including full budgetary authority for the Office, and adequate staffing to support its new powers and responsibilities."

Dr. Paul brings a long and distinguished body of work in immunology to the position of OAR director. He has published extensively on his work, and has served as the editor of The Annual Review of Immunology, editor of the advanced textbook Fundamental Immunology, and the author of many articles from scientific journals. In particular, his work on the regulation of T-cell function and on the molecules by which the immune system recognizes "self" from "non-self" make him an ideal appointee for this position.

TAG member Derek Hodel, who served on the Search Committee that recommended Dr. Paul's appointment, said, "We hope that Dr. Paul will look to the new generation of AIDS researchers who came of age during the epidemic and who represent some of the best and brightest scientists in the field, to guide him as he reshapes the NIH's AIDS research program into a more coherent whole."

The Treatment Action Group (TAG) fights to find a cure for AIDS and to ensure that all people living with HIV receive the necessary treatment, care and information that they need to save their lives. TAG focuses on the AIDS research effort, both private and public, the drug development process, and on US health care delivery systems.



BACKGROUNDER: THE OFFICE OF AIDS RESEARCH

The Office of AIDS Research (OAR) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), was established by Congress in 1988. OAR was originally a small coordinating office headed by Dr. Anthony Fauci, who also served as the director of the National Institute of Allergy & Infectious Diseases.

In 1991, the Institutes of Medicine (IOM) issued a key report on NIH AIDS research, recommending a significant expansion of the OAR's powers to oversee, plan, coordinate and evaluate research programs.

In 1992, TAG members Gregg Gonsalves and Mark Harrington also recommended significant expansion of OAR's coordinating powers in their report, AIDS Research at the NIH: A Critical Review.

TAG members worked with members of President Clinton's transition team, and with Senator Kennedy and Rep. Waxman, to integrate the IOM/TAG recommendations into the NIH Revitalization Act of 1993.

The legislation, sponsored by Senator Edward Kennedy and Congressman Henry Waxman, reshaped the administration of AIDS research at the NIH, by strengthening OAR's authority to plan, coordinate and budget AIDS activities at the NIH's 21 institutes. The AIDS provisions of the NIH Revitalization Act of 1993, which was passed by Congress last spring and signed by President Clinton on June 10, 1993, include:

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- * The OAR will develop an annual strategic research plan, focusing on the highest scientific priorities and plans for implementation;
- * The strategic plan for AIDS research will be tightly linked to the annual budget.
- * The OAR Director will be given a \$100 million discretionary fund to finance high-priority research projects.
- * The OAR Director will be given a new, high-profile advisory council, including AIDS activists, to guide planning and budgeting.

The NIH Revitalization Act was signed by President Clinton on June 10, 1993.

In the fall of 1993, a prestigious search committee, including TAG member Derek Hodel, interviewed a number of key scientists to serve as Director of the OAR. The selection of Dr. William Paul, who previously served as Chief of the Laboratory of Immunology at the NIAID, was announced on February 17, 1994.

Dr. Paul brings a long and distinguished body of work in immunology to the position of OAR Director. In particular, his work on the regulation of T-cell function and on the molecules by which the immune system recognizes "self" from "non-self" make him an ideal appointment for this position.

OFFICE OF DOMESTIC POLICY

THE WHITE HOUSE

FROM THE OFFICE OF: **CAROL H. RASCO**
ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT
FOR DOMESTIC POLICY

TO: Helvie

DRAFT RESPONSE FOR CHR BY: _____

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LET'S DISCUSS: _____

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REMARKS:

WHITE HOUSE STAFFING MEMORANDUM

JAN 13 REC'D

DATE: 1/13/94 ACTION/CONCURRENCE/COMMENT DUE BY: ----

1992 ANNUAL REPORT ON THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH (NIH)

SUBJECT: AIDS RESEARCH LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM (LRP)

	ACTION	FYI		ACTION	FYI
VICE PRESIDENT	☐	☐	PASTER	☐	☐
McLARTY	☐	☐	QUINN	☐	☐
NEEL	☐	☐	RASCO	☐	☒
PANETTA	☐	☐	RUBIN	☐	☐
BAGGETT	☐	☐	SEGAL	☐	☐
EMANUEL	☐	☐	SEIDMAN	☐	☐
GEARAN	☐	☐	STEPHANOPOULOS	☐	☐
GERGEN	☐	☐	TYSON	☐	☐
GIBBONS	☐	☐	VARNEY	☐	☐
HALE	☐	☐	WATKINS	☐	☐
HERMAN	☐	☐	WILLIAMS	☐	☐
LAKE	☐	☐	_____	☐	☐
LINDSEY	☐	☐	_____	☐	☐
McGINTY	☐	☐	_____	☐	☐
MYERS	☐	☐	_____	☐	☐
NUSSBAUM	☐	☐	_____	☐	☐

REMARKS:

FYI

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RESPONSE:

Rm 80

JOHN D. PODESTA
Assistant to the President
and Staff Secretary
Ext. 2702

THE WHITE HOUSE
CORRESPONDENCE TRACKING WORKSHEET

INCOMING

DATE RECEIVED: DECEMBER 22, 1993

94 JAN 12 P3:29

NAME OF CORRESPONDENT: THE HONORABLE DONNA E. SHALALA

SUBJECT: SUBMITS THE 1992 ANNUAL REPORT ON THE
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH (NIH) AIDS
RESEARCH LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM (LRP)

ROUTE TO: OFFICE/AGENCY	(STAFF NAME)	ACTION		DISPOSITION	
		ACT CODE	DATE YY/MM/DD	TYPE RESP	C COMPLETED D YY/MM/DD
RONALD GEISLER		ORG	93/12/22		C 94/01/11
<i>SS Pade</i>	REFERRAL NOTE: _____	A	94/01/11		____/____/____
	REFERRAL NOTE: _____		____/____/____		____/____/____
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COMMENTS:

Not for the President's Xmittal to the Congress.

ADDITIONAL CORRESPONDENTS: MEDIA:L INDIVIDUAL CODES: _____

MI MAIL USER CODES: (A) _____ (B) _____ (C) _____

*ACTION CODES:	*DISPOSITION	*OUTGOING	*
*	*	*CORRESPONDENCE:	*
*A-APPROPRIATE ACTION	*A-ANSWERED	*TYPE RESP=INITIALS	*
*C-COMMENT/RECOM	*B-NON-SPEC-REFERRAL	*OF SIGNER	*
*D-DRAFT RESPONSE	*C-COMPLETED	*CODE = A	*
*F-FURNISH FACT SHEET	*S-SUSPENDED	*COMPLETED = DATE OF	*
I-INFO COPY/NO ACT NEC		OUTGOING	*
*R-DIRECT REPLY W/COPY *			*
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*X-INTERIM REPLY *			*

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LETTER AT ALL TIMES AND SEND COMPLETED RECORD TO RECORDS
MANAGEMENT.

SCANNED



THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20201

DEC 17 1993

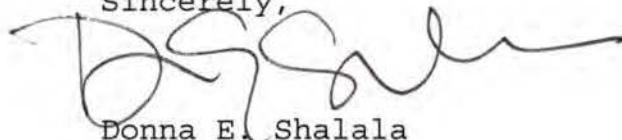
The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The enclosed 1992 Annual Report on the National Institutes of Health (NIH) AIDS Research Loan Repayment Program (LRP) is submitted pursuant to the requirements of § 487A (b), and § 338B (i) of the Public Health Service Act, as amended (42 USC 288-1(b) and 42 USC 2541-1[i]). This report relates the various activities and accomplishments, actual and projected, of the NIH AIDS Research LRP.

This report was prepared by the National Institutes of Health, Public Health Service, and is sent for your information.

Sincerely,



Donna E. Shalala

Enclosure

Annual Report to Congress

**NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH
AIDS RESEARCH LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM**

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Public Health Service
National Institutes of Health
Office of the Director
Office of AIDS Research

PREFACE

§ 338B (i) of the Public Health Service (PHS) Act, as amended, requires an annual report on the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) Loan Repayment Program. § 487A of the PHS Act authorizes the establishment of a loan repayment program for employees at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) who are engaged in research on acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). § 487A(b) incorporates those provisions of § 338B of the PHS Act which do not conflict with the provisions of the NIH AIDS Research LRP, and thus, an annual report is required for the NIH AIDS Research LRP.

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH
AIDS RESEARCH LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

This Annual Report to the Congress on the NIH AIDS Research Loan Repayment Program (LRP) describes program activities for Fiscal Year 1992*, the third year under which awards for the LRP have been made.

Report Requirement

§ 338B (i) of the Public Health Service (PHS) Act, as amended, requires the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to submit to Congress, no later than March 1 of each year, an annual report on the NHSC LRP, including in such report, with respect to the previous fiscal year, the following:

1. the total amount of loan payments made under the LRP in the year upon which reported;
2. the number, and type of health profession training, of individuals receiving loan payments under the LRP;
3. the number of applications filed under the LRP;
4. the educational institutions at which such individuals have received their training;
5. the total amount of the indebtedness of such individuals for educational loans as of the date on which the individuals become participants in the LRP;
6. the number of years of obligated service specified in the initial contract;
7. the number, and type of health professions who have breached the contract; and
8. effectiveness of the Secretary in recruiting health professionals to participate in the LRP.

§ 487A of the PHS Act authorizes the establishment of the NIH AIDS Research Loan Repayment Program. § 487A (b) of the PHS Act incorporates the reporting and administrative requirements found in § 338B (i), as amended.

*The 1992 awards include \$285,301 obligated from FY 1992 funds and \$894,253 obligated from carryover balances as authorized in Public Law 101-517.

Legislative Authority

Public Law 100-607, enacted November 4, 1988, required the Secretary of HHS, not later than one year after the date of the enactment of the Health Professions Reauthorization Act of 1988, to establish and implement a program of loan repayments for appropriately qualified health professionals, who, by contractual obligation, agree to engage in research with respect to AIDS as employees of the NIH.

NIH AIDS Research LRP Activities

The NIH AIDS Research LRP was enacted on November 4, 1988 (Public Law 100-607). A Notice announcing the implementation of the NIH AIDS Research LRP appeared in the November 8, 1989, issue of the Federal Register. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approved the LRP on June 15, 1990, by granting it clearance #0925-0361. A Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) is being cleared by NIH.

The NIH AIDS Research LRP provides, for each year of participants' full service, loan repayments to participants' lenders of up to \$20,000 a year. These participants are NIH physicians and scientists who are engaged in qualified AIDS research.

The NIH AIDS Research LRP accepted applications from candidates who were employed as researchers in the following specialties: allergy, biochemistry, critical care, dentistry, dermatology, epidemiology, immunology, microbiology, neurology, ophthalmology, pediatrics, pharmacy and pharmacology, psychology, public health, in addition to internal medicine.

The application packages of ICD-endorsed researchers were reviewed by the AIDS Research Loan Repayment Committee (LRC). The LRC is comprised of senior scientists from the intramural and extramural research staff, who are appointed by the Director, NIH. In FY 1992, the LRC convened in February, June, and September. In addition to considering policy questions, the LRC reviewed 28 ICD-endorsed application packages.

The LRC, in reviewing the application packages, considered the appropriateness of the research assignment with respect to AIDS; the scientific merit of the assignment; and the credentials of both the applicant and supervisor.

The LRC approved 26 of the 28 ICD-endorsed applicants. Two of the approved applicants withdrew their applications and the remaining 24 entered into loan repayment contracts of \$1,125,484 in FY 1992 as follows:

National Cancer Institute (NCI) - \$320,995; National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) - \$267,362; National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) - \$198,256; Clinical Center (CC) - \$164,896; National Eye Institute (NEI) - \$118,657; National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS) - \$38,210; and National Institute of Dental Research (NIDR) - \$17,108.

Total obligations made during FY 1992 equal \$1,179,554, including adjustments of \$54,070 made to participants who executed service contracts prior to FY 1992.

The NIH AIDS Research LRP makes payments directly to participants' lenders. In FY 1992, \$847,381 was obligated for direct loan repayments to lenders, with quarterly disbursements made in FY 1992 and those to be made in FYs 1993, 1994, and 1995. These payments to lenders represent taxable income to LRP participants. This income is reported to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and results in an increase in participants' Federal, State, and local tax liability.

The NIH AIDS Research LRP, for the purpose of providing reimbursements for Federal tax liability resulting from loan repayments, shall make payments directly to a participant's IRS account in an amount equal to 39 percent of the total amount of loan repayments made for the taxable year involved. Additionally, the NIH AIDS Research LRP may make additional payments to a participant for State and local tax liabilities resulting from loan repayment benefits. In FY 1992, \$332,173, including \$1,524 for State and local tax reimbursements, was obligated to cover tax reimbursements disbursed in FY 1992 and reimbursements to be disbursed on behalf of qualified participants during FYs 1993, 1994, and 1995.

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH
AIDS RESEARCH LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM

ACTIVITIES FOR FISCAL YEAR 1992*

1. The total amount of loan payments made under the Loan Repayment Program.
2. The number and type of health profession training of individuals receiving loan payments under the Loan Repayment Program.

National Institutes of Health
AIDS Research Loan Repayment Program
Obligations Made Toward Qualified Loans
Fiscal Year 1992*

<u>Professional Degree(s)</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Loan Payments</u>	<u>Tax Reimbursements</u>
M.D.	14	\$652,860	\$252,712
M.D., Ph.D.	4	35,222	13,641
M.D., M.P.H.	2	49,057	20,300
Ph.D.	2	27,490	10,721
D.D.S.	1	12,318	4,790
Pharm.D.	1	33,362	13,011
		<u>37,072**</u>	<u>16,998**</u>
	24	\$847,381	\$332,173***

*The 1992 awards include \$285,301 obligated from FY 1992 funds and \$894,253 obligated from carryover balances as authorized in Public Law 101-517.

**The total Loan Payments and Tax Reimbursements include \$54,070 in adjustments for participants who executed service contracts prior to FY 1992.

***The total Tax Reimbursements include \$1,524 for reimbursements to participants for additional State and local tax liabilities incurred as a result of loan repayment benefits.

3. The number of applications filed and the health disciplines represented of individuals receiving loan repayments. The number count below includes participants with multiple health disciplines. There were 28 applications filed, 24 of which are participants receiving loan repayments. These participants represent the following health disciplines:

Internal Medicine	7	Dermatology	1
Immunology	5	Epidemiology (M.P.H.)	1
Neurology	3	Microbiology	1
Critical Care	2	Pharmacology	1
Ophthalmology	2	Pharmacy	1
Pediatrics	2	Psychology	1
Biochemistry	1	Public Health (M.P.H.)	1
Dentistry	1		

4. The educational institutions at which such individuals received their training. The participants in the NIH AIDS Research LRP received their professional degrees at the following institutions:

Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) -

Boston University School of Medicine
 University of California at San Francisco
 The Chicago Medical School
 Georgetown University
 Harvard Medical School
 The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine
 Michigan State University College of Human Medicine
 State University of New York at Stonybrook
 Northwestern University Medical School
 Ohio State University College of Medicine
 Medical College of Pennsylvania
 University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey
 University of Southern California School of Medicine
 University of Vermont
 University of Virginia School of Medicine (2)
 Washington University School of Medicine (2)
 Yale University (2)

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) -

Boston University School of Medicine
 The Catholic University of America
 Duke University
 Georgetown University
 University of Miami
 Ohio State University

Doctor of Dental Science (D.D.S.) -

New York University

Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D.) -

Auburn University School of Pharmacy

Master of Public Health (M.P.H.) -

Columbia University School of Public Health
Yale University

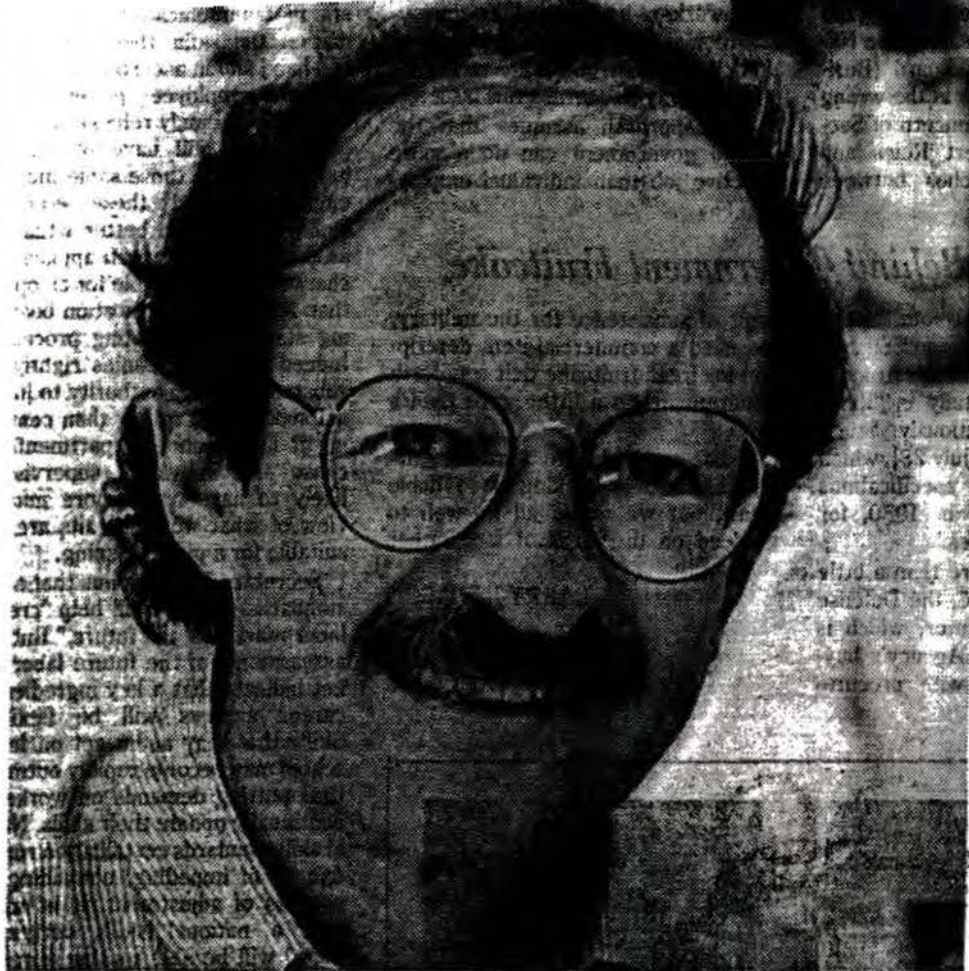
5. The total amount of indebtedness for educational loans for the applicants accepted into the NIH AIDS Research LRP in FY 1992 equals \$1,633,531.

6. Initial contracts were executed for 14 health professionals to cover a minimum of 2 years of obligated service and 10 health professionals to cover 1 year of obligated service. Nineteen individuals have completed the minimum 2-year service period.

7. No individuals have breached the contract.

8. The NIH AIDS Research LRP is designed to counter the growing economic disincentives to embark on research careers and to provide an incentive to engage in AIDS research, as employees of the NIH. The NIH AIDS Research LRP has been publicized through the Federal Register, the NIH Guide for Grants and Contracts, and at the following scientific meetings and symposia: the Association of American Medical Colleges' annual meeting and their conference for financial aid administrators of health professions schools; the annual meeting of the Association of American Physicians, the American Society for Clinical Investigation, and the American Federation for Clinical Research; the Minority Access to Research Careers - Minority Biomedical Research Support Symposium; the NIH AIDS Postdoctoral Fellows Meeting; and the Society of Adolescent Medicine annual meeting. Some individuals accepted into the NIH AIDS Research LRP would have accepted positions elsewhere if not for the financial incentives of the loan repayment program.

FYI



BY KAREN FREUD—UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

PLAYERS



HAROLD VARMUS, Director-designate,
National Institutes of Health

EDUCATION

BA, Amherst College;
MA, Harvard University;
MD, Columbia
University. Internship in
medicine at
Presbyterian Hospital in
New York. Clinical
associate at National
Institute of Arthritis and
Metabolic Diseases
(part of NIH) in
1974-79.

PERSONAL

Married, two children.
Varmus is an avid
bicyclist and has broad
interests in the arts and
humanities.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Winner of the 1989
Nobel Prize in medicine
with Michael Bishop for
cancer research. Has
taught at the University
of California Medical
Center in San Francisco
since 1970. Currently
holds the American
Cancer Society
professorship in
molecular virology.
Teaches in departments
of microbiology and
immunology, and
biochemistry and
biophysics.

A Hands-On Researcher for NIH

Clinton Says Varmus, a Nobel Laureate, 'Will Bring Great Strength and Leadership'

By John Schwartz
Washington Post Staff Writer

It's hard to find anybody around the National Institutes of Health who isn't excited about Harold Varmus, the Nobel laureate tapped by President Clinton last week to head the nation's premier biomedical research center.

The prospect of a seasoned "bench scientist"—a hands-on researcher—not to mention a world-famous one, leading the agency is cause for breaking out the champagne among the pipettes. The reaction of Hynda Kleinman, a cell biologist active in female and minority employment issues at NIH, is typical: "I'm ecstatic," she said.

In announcing his selection, Clinton said in a statement that "as one of the world's leading medical researchers, Harold Varmus will bring great strength and leadership to the National Institutes of Health."

Donna E. Shalala, secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, echoed the president, describing the appointment as "absolutely first-rank." She said Varmus "represents a new generation of scientists" because his interests encompass the humanities as well as the sciences.

Like most nominees, Varmus, 53, will not grant interviews until after the confirmation vote. In a statement, he said that he was "pleased and flattered" by the nomination.

Few posts are more important to the nation's health—and to the health of scientific research—than director of NIH. Since 1887, when it was the one-room Laboratory of Hygiene, NIH has grown into a vast biomedical research conglomerate with a 300-acre campus in Bethesda and an annual budget that tops \$10 billion.

The research conducted through the 24 institutes, centers and divisions that make up NIH and at its 1,700 research institutions worldwide affects every branch of medicine, from heart disease and cancer to mental health and gene technology. NIH employs 19,000 people, 4,500 of whom hold professional or research doctorate degrees.

Varmus comes to the job as a scientist with the ultimate credential: In 1989, he received the Nobel prize in medicine for his work with Michael Bishop, a fellow researcher at the University of California at San Francisco.

The two proved that "oncogenes," cancer-causing genes that have been found in many cells, are not outside invaders but

are found naturally within the genetic code of humans and virtually every other animal. If slightly altered, these normal genes can become cancer-causing genes. The discovery has been one of the bedrocks of modern cancer research.

Varmus would be the first Nobel laureate to head NIH, although four scientists made their prize-winning discoveries in NIH laboratories, and at least 75 more have received NIH support for their research.

Although his credentials as a scientist are impeccable, Varmus doesn't have all the qualifications expected of the director of such a sprawling enterprise. The Council on Excellence in Government's "Prune Book" of the toughest science and technology jobs in Washington (patterned on the government's "Plum Book" of positions for political appointees) describes the job of NIH director as one only for "individuals with a substantial record in administering a major medical research or health care facility."

That is exactly the kind of experience Varmus does not have. He runs a sizable lab at UCSF with about 20 researchers, which he plans to move onto the NIH campus to continue his research if he is confirmed. Other researcher/administrators such as Anthony S. Fauci, head of the National Institute on Allergy and Infectious Diseases, have done so as well.

Bruce Alberts, head of the National Academy of Sciences and head of the search committee for NIH director, said that of the four candidates that his group put forward, Varmus "was the only one without major formal administrative experience." The group listed that fact as Varmus's one weakness in their one-page evaluations of each candidate. Judith Rodin, provost of Yale University, was reportedly Varmus's principal competition for the post.

Alberts is not worried about Varmus's administrative skills, however. He said that he and others expect Varmus to overcome that problem quickly. "He just has to know who to go to for good advice," Alberts said. "The important thing about a leader is somebody who knows what he doesn't know and knows when to ask for advice."

If confirmed, Varmus will follow director Bernadine P. Healy, a highly visible Bush appointee whose term ended in July. During her tenure, Healy promoted a broad initiative for women's health and encouraged a major role in the massive human genome project. Since leaving

NIH, Healy has moved back to Ohio and is expected to run for the Senate seat now occupied by Howard M. Metzenbaum (D).

Though Healy got high marks for effort, NIH did not prosper under her leadership, agency researchers say. NIH has long felt the heat from government scrutiny on almost everything from its budget to the ethics of its most prominent researchers.

Rep. John D. Dingell (D-Mich.), chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, has probed NIH repeatedly to root out scientific fraud. Employees' siege mentality, tight budgets and a sense of bureaucratic malaise have hurt morale and made it harder to attract top talent to NIH, researchers say. And as activists for different diseases—from AIDS to cystic fibrosis—become more organized and forceful, NIH researchers have come under even more pressure.

Although this would not be an easy job for anyone to step into, Varmus's supporters say his range of experience will enable him to handle the challenges ahead.

Friends speak in awe of Varmus's wide interests. A liberal arts major as an undergraduate, he studied Elizabethan poetry and earned a master's degree in English from Harvard before applying to medical school. His friend Stephen Greenblatt, a Renaissance scholar at the University of California at Berkeley, said that although the divide between the sciences and the humanities seems to grow wider and deeper all the time, "Harold Varmus is one of the few people in the country—and probably the world—who at a very authentic and deep level have an understanding of both worlds."

Varmus could become an articulate and passionate spokesman for the sciences, added Alan Friedman, who heads the New York Hall of Science. Science has lacked such advocates and suffered for it, Friedman said. "The more the public knows, the more interested they'll be," he said. "It's when the public doesn't know what's going on that the concern becomes real terror."

Varmus will appear before the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee for his confirmation hearings, probably in September when Congress reconvenes. As of Friday, Varmus's official paperwork had not arrived at the committee, which means his nomination won't actually be official until after the August recess. Hearings won't start for at least two weeks after that, a committee staff member said.