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Todd A. Summers

03/11/99 11:07:51 AM

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Record Type: Record

To: mskolfield@osaspa.dhhs.gov@inet

cc:

Subject: Draft POTUS Statement on Nabel Announcement

Melissa - As you can tell, this is not my forte, but here's a stab at an announcement!

**President Welcomes Announcement of Dr. Gary Nabel as New NIH Vaccine Research Center
Director**

I am very pleased to join Secretary of HHS Donna Shalala, NIH Director Harold Varmus, and AIDS policy office director Sandra Thurman in welcoming Dr. Gary Nabel as the first director of the new vaccine research center at the NIH. Dr. Nabel's long and distinguished career as a research scientist will be an incredible asset in our efforts to find preventative vaccines.

The first order of business for Dr. Nabel will be the effort to find a vaccine for HIV. This is a top priority of our AIDS research efforts, with over 750,000 people here in the United States--and over 30 million people across the world--living with this deadly virus. Our best hope, perhaps our only hope, of bringing an end to the AIDS pandemic is to find a safe and effective vaccine.

I am confident that Dr. Nabel will be able to use the new vaccine research center to focus the NIH resources necessary to achieve our goal of finding a vaccine for HIV within the next decade. Dr. Varmus and his team of expert researchers at the NIH, working in collaboration with scientists from across the globe, have produced remarkable results in reducing AIDS mortality here and in many other developed nations. However, there are nearly 7 million new infections with HIV every year across the globe, with over 90% of those occurring in countries ill-equipped to utilize these remarkable treatments.

The human tragedy that AIDS continues to bring throughout the world must move all of us to action. The search for a vaccine for HIV must continue to be a global priority for millions of precious lives hang in the balance.

DRAFT

**President Welcomes Announcement of Dr. Gary Nabel as New NIH Vaccine
Research Center Director**

I am very pleased to join Secretary of HHS Donna Shalala, NIH Director Harold Varmus, and my AIDS policy office director Sandra Thurman in welcoming Dr. Gary Nabel as the first director of the new vaccine research center at the NIH. Dr. Nabel's long and distinguished career as a research scientist will be an incredible asset in our efforts to find preventative vaccines.

The first order of business for Dr. Nabel will be the effort to develop a vaccine for HIV. This is a top priority of our AIDS research efforts. Here in the United States, over 40,000 people are newly infected with HIV every year. Across the world, the rate is nearly 6 million people per year. These are lives in jeopardy. Though we have made remarkable progress in treating HIV and AIDS, there is still no cure. So our best hope--perhaps our only hope--of bringing an end to the AIDS pandemic is to find a safe and effective vaccine.

I am confident that Dr. Nabel will be able to use the new vaccine research center to focus the NIH resources necessary to achieve our goal of finding a vaccine for HIV within the next decade. Dr. Varmus and his team of expert researchers at the NIH, working in collaboration with scientists from across the globe, have produced remarkable results in reducing AIDS mortality here and in many other developed nations. Their improved understanding of how HIV works will be invaluable in the effort to find a vaccine to prevent infection in the first place.

The human tragedy that AIDS continues to bring throughout the world must move all of us to action. The search for a vaccine for HIV must continue to be a global priority because millions of precious lives hang in the balance.



OFFICE OF NATIONAL AIDS POLICY
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
THE WHITE HOUSE

FACSIMILE TRANSMITTAL SHEET

TO:

Ann Thomas

FROM:

Todd Summers

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Thx —

DRAFT - not for

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 11, 1999

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or

release

Dr. Gary Nabel Named Director of NIH Vaccine Research Center

HHS Secretary Donna E. Shalala today announced that Gary Nabel, M.D., Ph.D., has been chosen as Director of the Vaccine Research Center (VRC) at the National Institutes of Health. The Center's initial focus is to develop candidate vaccines against HIV.

"President Clinton has challenged the nation to develop a vaccine against AIDS in the next ten years," said Secretary Shalala. "I am extremely pleased that Dr. Nabel has joined us to accept that challenge. He brings the expertise, innovative thinking and leadership we need to achieve that goal."

"Gary Nabel is a superb scientist who has excelled at the frontiers of virology, immunology, gene therapy and molecular biology," said NIH director Dr. Harold Varmus. "As a result of his experiences with clinical and laboratory research in academia and extensive interactions with industrial partners, he is remarkably well prepared to lead the complex, multidisciplinary and collaborative activities that will be required to develop an effective HIV vaccine. His recent work---on novel strategies for gene therapy for AIDS and for vaccines against cancer and Ebola virus---illustrates the imagination and drive that he will bring to the NIH Vaccine Research Center."

Dr. Nabel, who will assume this position on April 11, comes to NIH from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, where he is the Henry Sewall professor of internal medicine and professor of biological chemistry. He also is a Howard Hughes Medical Institute Investigator.

A novel venture within the NIH intramural research program, the VRC receives joint funding from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) and the National

Cancer Institute (NCI) and is spearheaded by NIAID, NCI and the NIH Office of AIDS Research.

In May 1997, President Clinton set a goal to develop an AIDS vaccine within 10 years. The NIH responded by creating the VRC, a state-of-the-art biomedical research laboratory that will facilitate the development of vaccines. The Center will stimulate multidisciplinary research, from basic and clinical immunology and virology through vaccine design and production. The VRC will integrate modern immunological science with a detailed understanding of how HIV disease develops, the creation of novel vaccine vectors and immunogens and new vaccination strategies.

In response to the announcement, Dr. Nabel said, "I'm honored and excited by the opportunity to contribute to vaccine development through this unique center at the NIH. The development of an AIDS vaccine remains a formidable challenge and an urgent need, and the VRC hopes to drive the development of successful vaccines with our partners in academia, industry and the public."

Currently the VRC is a center without walls, involving a core group of NIH scientists with expertise in immunology, virology and vaccine development. Construction of a five-story facility on the NIH campus, which began in August 1998, is expected to be completed by mid-2000. When the VRC is fully operational, Dr. Nabel will oversee about 100 scientists and support staff.

Dr. Nabel's interest in HIV gene therapy, supported by NIAID for the past 10 years, began with basic research and progressed systematically to clinical studies. He and his colleagues developed Rev M10, a competitive inhibitor of the HIV Rev protein, which is required for HIV replication. The Rev M10 gene, when introduced into cells, makes a protein

that prevents authentic REV from binding to the cell, thereby short-circuiting HIV's replication cycle. In 1996, they reported on the first HIV gene therapy trial, in which three HIV-infected patients had been infused with their own CD4+ T cells that had been modified with the Rev M10 antiviral gene. The scientists found that CD4+ T cells containing Rev M10 survive longer in the blood than unmodified cells, with no adverse side effects. His group continues work to improve this novel therapeutic strategy.

Dr. Nabel is also one of the first researchers to develop a DNA-based therapeutic vaccine against cancer. He and his colleagues have used direct gene transfer to introduce therapeutic proteins into patients with melanoma. Their clinical studies were among the first to demonstrate the feasibility and safety of this approach. NCI has supported this research for eight years.

He also has applied his gene therapy expertise to the deadly Ebola virus. In late 1997, Dr. Nabel led a group of researchers who reported on their successful experiments in guinea pigs showing that a DNA-based vaccine could generate protective immune responses to Ebola virus.

Dr. Nabel graduated magna cum laude from Harvard University in 1975. He then entered the university's M.D.-Ph.D. program, completing his Ph.D. in 1980 and his M.D. two years later. He continued to divide his time between research and medical training. From 1980 to 1984, he worked as a postdoctoral research fellow in the Laboratory of Immunopathology at the Dana Farber Cancer Institute in Boston. Meanwhile, after completing his medical degree, he pursued an internship and residency training in internal medicine at Boston's Brigham and Women's Hospital. In 1985, he joined the laboratory of David Baltimore, Ph.D., at the Whitehead Institute in Cambridge, working there for two years as a research associate. Dr. Baltimore, now president of the California Institute of Technology, chairs the NIH AIDS Vaccine Research Committee.

In 1987, Dr. Nabel became an assistant professor of internal medicine and assistant

professor of biological chemistry at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. He also was named an assistant investigator of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute there.

Dr. Nabel has served on several NIH advisory committees, including the NIAID AIDS Research Advisory Committee, which he chaired from 1996-97.

His honors include the James Tolbert Shipley Prize for Research from Harvard Medical School in 1982, the Midwest American Federation for Clinical Research Young Investigator Award in 1992 and the ASBMB-Amgen Scientific Achievement Award in 1996. Last year, he was elected a member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences. In addition to his faculty positions, Dr. Nabel has been director of the Center for Gene Therapy at the University of Michigan Medical Center since 1997, and co-director of the University of Michigan Center for Molecular Medicine since 1994. Dr. Nabel currently is associate editor of the Journal of Virology and the Journal of Clinical Investigation and serves on the editorial boards of several other journals.

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Record Type: Record

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Subject: FW: ScienceNOW: Nabel to Head AIDS Vaccine Institute

From: Greg Folkers [SMTP:GFOLKERS@niaid.nih.gov]
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Sent: Wednesday, March 10, 1999 7:59 PM
Subject: ScienceNOW: Nabel to Head AIDS Vaccine Institute

<http://www.sciencenow.org/> <<http://www.sciencenow.org/>>
> 10 March 1999 7:00

PM

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> Nabel to Head AIDS Vaccine Institute
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> A long-leaderless AIDS vaccine research institute has finally found a
> director. After an 18-month search, the National Institutes of Health
> (NIH) will name University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, molecular
biologist
> Gary Nabel as the first chief of the high-profile new center,
> ScienceNow has learned. The announcement could come as early as
> tomorrow.
>
> In May 1997, President Bill Clinton announced creation of the new
> Vaccine Research Center with much fanfare (Science, 23 May 1997, p.
> 1184). He said the center, now being built on NIH's suburban
> Washington, D.C., campus, would spearhead efforts to develop, within

a

> decade, a vaccine to prevent people from acquiring the HIV virus.
> While planning for the center forged ahead, however, NIH
> administrators had difficulty recruiting a director, with several
> candidates falling victim to bureaucratic infighting. The delay
> prompted criticism from some AIDS activists, who said the
> Administration wasn't following through on its plans.
>
> Early this year, however, word leaked that Nabel had emerged as the
> leading candidate for the job. The news rankled some vaccine
> researchers, who noted that while he is a noted authority on using
> gene therapy to fight AIDS, he is a relative newcomer to vaccine
> research. Still, Nabel's selection is "a super choice," believes AIDS
> researcher Ashley Haase of the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

> Nable "may be relatively new to the [vaccine] game," he says, "but
> he'll bring a fresh perspective and get plenty of support" from
> veterans in the field.
>
> --DAVID MALAKOFF
>

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS
National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 11, 1999

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Dr. Nabel, who will assume this position on April 11, comes to NIH from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, where he is the Henry Sewall professor of internal medicine and professor of biological chemistry. He also is a Howard Hughes Medical Institute Investigator.

"Gary Nabel is a superb scientist who has excelled at the frontiers of virology, immunology, gene therapy, and molecular biology," said NIH director Dr. Harold Varmus. "As a result of his experiences with clinical and laboratory research in academia and extensive

interactions with industrial partners, he is remarkably well prepared to lead the complex, multidisciplinary, and collaborative activities that will be required to develop an effective HIV vaccine. His recent work---on novel strategies for gene therapy for AIDS and for vaccines against cancer and Ebola virus---illustrates the imagination and drive that he will bring to the NIH Vaccine Research Center."

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