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SABIN VACCINE REPORT

the newsletter of the Albert B. Sabin Vaccine Institute at Georgetown University

Volume I, Number 1, September 1998

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*A scientist who is also a human being
cannot rest while knowledge which might
be used to reduce suffering sits on the shelf.*

Albert B. Sabin

The Albert B. Sabin Vaccine Institute is a non-profit institute dedicated to continuing the work and achieving the vision of Albert B. Sabin: to fully realize the enormous potential of vaccination to prevent disease.

Founded in 1994, the Institute strives to prevent death by promoting the development of new vaccines and delivery systems.

Dedicated to Disease Prevention

www.sabin.georgetown.edu

Sabin Vaccine Institute Announces Sabin-Hilleman Fellows Program

BY ERICA SEIGUER

In keeping with one of its central missions, the Albert B. Sabin Vaccine Institute has recently created the Sabin-Hilleman Fellows Program. A tribute to the pioneering work of two great figures in vaccinology, Albert B. Sabin and Maurice R. Hilleman, the Fellows Program will nurture talented high school students and undergraduates as they pursue their interests in the health sciences, particularly in vaccinology and immunology. Sabin Vaccine Institute Chairman H.R. Shepherd, a close friend of both Hilleman and the late Sabin, underscores that the program is designed to encourage the next generation of scientists and health professionals to dedicate themselves to health promotion through disease prevention. "The Fellows Program will provide young people with an extraordinary opportunity to gain unique insight into the worlds of immunology and vaccinology. The Institute is committed to training the next generation of leaders in the health sciences."

The program, developed by Herbert Herscovitz, Georgetown University Professor of Microbiology and Immunology, the Academy for Educational Development, and Sabin Institute staff, will support Sabin-Hilleman Fellows' participation in activities aimed at the prevention of disease through the better use of vaccines. They will meet policy-makers, vac-

through a collaboration between the student and mentor, the Sabin-Hilleman Fellows will be exposed to the latest in vaccine design and implementation. Possible projects might include internships at the Global Programme for Vaccines and Immunization at the World Health Organization or in a research laboratory at the National Institutes of Health.

The Institute will begin the selection process in February 1999, when application materials are due. The first Sabin-Hilleman Fellows will be notified in April of their acceptance and the internships will begin shortly thereafter. Mrs. Heloisa Sabin, co-founder of the Institute, is looking forward to meeting the Sabin-Hilleman Fellows: "Albert used to say to young people with ideas and interest in vaccinology that during his thirty years in the development of the oral polio vaccine, for every gratification, he had at least 100 frustrations. He told them not to give up. The Fellows Program will be important in ensuring that they *do not* give up."



photo courtesy of L. Rosenthal

Sabin-Hilleman Fellows will gather to discuss key issues in vaccine development and implementation.

cine scientists, and clinicians from academia and industry at Institute conferences. Following their work experience, fellows will stay in touch with each other and the Institute through an alumni network. It is hoped that the relationships forged will facilitate the continuous sharing of knowledge and ideas, with the ultimate goal of accelerating the development of new vaccines, methods to deliver them, and immunization strategies.

The Program is focused on high school students and undergraduates, who are eligible to participate in internships and research experiences that enhance the three-fold mission of the Sabin Vaccine Institute:

- ♦ stimulating progress in vaccine science;
- ♦ advocating sound policy for the development and use of vaccines;
- ♦ educating the public about vaccines and immunization.

By participating in existing internships, or in projects designed

Neal Nathanson: New OAR Head Brings Diplomacy, Toughness

BY PATRICIA THOMAS

"History will judge us according to whether we develop a vaccine for AIDS," Neal Nathanson said, speaking from the periphery of a crowded meeting room at the National Institutes of Health. The need for a preventive vaccine is urgent, he continued, and the NIH must preserve the clinical trials system that has been testing candidate vaccines for the past 10 years.

Only two weeks into his job as the new director of the Office of AIDS Research (OAR) at NIH, Nathanson had come to the June 2 meeting of the AIDS Research Advisory Committee expecting to listen, not talk. But that resolve melted by mid-afternoon, after officials from the Division of AIDS (DAIDS) had laid out their plans for changing how the NIH tests HIV vaccines and other preventive measures. Far from rubber-stamping the DAIDS plan, members of this top-level advisory committee chipped away at its administrative details, especially provisions that might impinge on their own roles in clinical trials. Finally the discussion bogged down in the pros and cons of allowing institutions that had not already done HIV vaccine trials to compete for places in the new network. That brought Nathanson to his feet.

"I had the feeling that there were people obsessing about the process and forgetting about the product," he said later. "I'm not interested in open competition, I'm interested in a product. What the world needs is not an open competition — it needs a vaccine." With 35 years of experience in virology, epidemiology, and public health, including leadership positions at two top medical schools, Nathanson has long had

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