



ALLIANCE FOR
MICROBICIDE
DEVELOPMENT

News Release

For Immediate Release
October 31, 2005

Contact: Annette Larkin, 202-429-4929
annettelarkin@rationalpr.com

October 31, 2005 – (Washington, DC) – The Alliance for Microbicide Development hails today's announcement by pharmaceutical giants Merck and Bristol-Myers Squibb that each has granted to the International Partnership for Microbicides (IPM) royalty-free licenses to develop, manufacture, and distribute new antiretroviral compounds as potential microbicides to protect women from HIV.

Members of key classes of antiretrovirals known as entry and attachment inhibitors, the compounds are designed to keep HIV from efficiently entering host cells at critical points. “The microbicide field is delighted that Merck and Bristol-Myers Squibb have joined forces with us in the war against HIV,” said Polly Harrison, director of the Alliance. “The agreements are a big step forward for the kind of public-private partnerships we need to expedite microbicide development, and I hope to see other companies with promising candidates do likewise.”

“This advances the goal of developing microbicides that are not only safe and effective but also affordable,” said Anna Forbes, Acting Director of the Global Campaign for Microbicides. “By contributing these candidate products to the field, with the assurance that if successful, they will be marketed in the developing world on a non-profit basis, these companies bring us closer to the time when we can put new prevention tools into the hands of those who need them most.”

-more-

Henry Gabelnick, Ph.D., executive director of CONRAD and board member of IPM agrees, “This is great news for all of us who are involved in developing an effective microbicide. The more compounds we have in clinical trials, the closer we’ll get to having an effective product ready for distribution.”

The microbicide field has built an extraordinary amount of scientific momentum, with five first-generation candidates now in large-scale effectiveness trials around the world and other candidates well into safety trials. Given current scientific advancements and a bigger pipeline of potential microbicidal agents, an effective microbicide could be developed by the end of the decade, and once available, could well change the course of the AIDS epidemic.

The Alliance for Microbicide Development is a global, non-profit coalition of representatives from scientific research institutions, small biopharmaceutical companies, and health advocacy groups, whose shared mission is to speed development of safe, effective, affordable topical microbicides to prevent sexually transmitted infections, most critically HIV/AIDS. <http://www.microbicide.org>

The Global Campaign for Microbicides is an international movement of activists, citizens and non profit organizations dedicated to accelerating access to new HIV prevention tools, especially for women. www.global-campaign.org

CONRAD is a cooperating agency of USAID committed to improving reproductive health by expanding the contraceptive choices of women and men and by helping to prevent the transmission of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. CONRAD is administered through the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Eastern Virginia Medical School (EVMS) in Norfolk, VA, with its main office located in Arlington, VA. <http://www.conrad.org>

###