



**LIVERPOOL
SCHOOL OF
TROPICAL
MEDICINE**



PRESS RELEASE

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School's key role in \$100 million disease treatment programme

Liverpool Associates in Tropical Health (LATH), the consultancy arm of The Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, is a partner in a new programme to reduce the impact of neglected tropical diseases. Funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the rapid impact disease control programme will treat more than 40 million people annually for five years.

The \$100 million programme will be led by RTI International in partnership with LATH, the Sabin Vaccine Institute, the Schistosomiasis Control Initiative at Imperial College London and the International Trachoma Initiative. It will focus on the integrated control of seven of the most prevalent neglected tropical diseases which cause severe disability and death in some of the world's poorest countries including onchocerciasis (river blindness), schistosomiasis (snail fever) and lymphatic filariasis (elephantiasis). Drawing on the expertise and networks of the Liverpool School, LATH will provide key technical and managerial staff in Liverpool and Washington to support project implementation as well as sourcing and managing short-term technical assistance to the programme.

Professor David Molyneux, Senior Project Adviser to LATH and Director of the School's Lymphatic Filariasis Support Centre in Liverpool said: "We are very pleased that the US Agency for International Development is supporting this important initiative. I suspect many people in developed nations would be surprised that these diseases can be treated for less than 30 pence per person. Taken together these diseases represent a burden as big as malaria. By integrating our efforts with those of our partners, we can make a significant impact by preventing massive disability and the attendant poverty that these diseases cause."

The project is one of the first large-scale efforts to integrate existing disease treatment projects into a single programme of mass drug distribution using just a few drugs to target several diseases at the same time. As well as achieving cost savings, the programme will enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of single disease projects by integrating treatment, monitoring and evaluation programs. The drugs for the programme are being supplied free of charge by major pharmaceutical companies, some for as long as they are needed.

Alan Fenwick, project director for RTI International said: "Because many of these tropical diseases occur in the same areas and affect the same populations, distributing safe treatments for them will be more effective and cost efficient and will help make a substantial impact toward achieving the Millennium Development Goal of combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases."

Professor Peter Hotez, alternate technical director, said he is confident that many of these diseases can be eradicated: "If the selected treatments are administered annually in these countries over a five-year period, the infections will gradually be reduced until the diseases are eliminated."

"Neglected diseases are a huge burden," said Richard Greene, director of the Office of Health, Infectious Disease and Nutrition at USAID. "This significant investment will improve the lives of millions of people afflicted with disabling conditions through effective, low-cost, mass drug administration and associated education programs."

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Notes to Editors

Liverpool Associates in Tropical Health is an international health consultancy and programme management company and is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM). LATH is a dynamic, flexible organisation and has an impressive track record in managing large scale, long term health improvement programmes working very closely with government, donors and other key stakeholders in some of the poorest countries in the world. LATH delivers sustainability through capacity development, continually putting issues of equity and vulnerability at the fore. With a team of more than 40 people working in Liverpool, London, Pakistan, Malawi, Kenya, Ghana and the USA, LATH builds on, and contributes to, the strength of the LSTM, seeking to help it achieve its strategic plan and mission. As a subsidiary company of LSTM, LATH enjoys close links with the School and a direct working relationship with researchers and clinicians employed by the School. LSTM has been a leader in research, education, and training for tropical disease control since the late 1890s, including work on all of the thirteen of the neglected tropical diseases. It has recently received multimillion dollar grants from the Gates Foundation, the British government and the European Union and is expanding with a new Centre for Tropical and Infectious Diseases scheduled for completion in December 2007. It also hosts the Lymphatic Filariasis Support Centre, jointly funded by the UK Department for International Development and GlaxoSmithKline. Liverpool School staff are *de facto* associates of the company and will provide much of the technical assistance offered to project grantees. The company will also provide several members of the NTD project management staff. For more information, please visit www.lath.com

RTI International, the US's second largest independent nonprofit research organization, is dedicated to conducting research and development that improves the human condition by turning knowledge into practice. With a staff of more than 2,500 people, RTI offers innovative research and technical services to governments and businesses worldwide in the areas of health and pharmaceuticals, education and training, surveys and statistics, advanced technology, democratic governance, economic and social development, energy and the environment. RTI maintains nine offices in the United States, five international offices, and one international subsidiary, as well as project offices around the world. RTI has been working for more than ten years to prevent and control vector-borne diseases such as malaria and other tropical diseases. For more information, please visit www.rti.org.