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Involving the Indianapolis community in the advancement of health care:
Fairbanks Institute engages local partners;
readies for subject recruitment
Dr. Cynthia Helphingstine named President and COO

INDIANAPOLIS, IN, October 3, 2007 – Coronary artery disease (CAD) affects more than 15 million people nationwide and is the leading cause of death in the U.S. for both men and women. More than 340,000 Hoosiers have CAD, but the Indianapolis community has an opportunity to help decrease these growing numbers through a new community-based research initiative.

Indianapolis is home to the Fairbanks Institute for Healthy Communities, a non-profit organization that is creating one of the nation's most comprehensive resources for finding better ways to prevent, diagnose and treat the nation's most common diseases. The Indianapolis population will serve as the basis for the Institute's study platform that will begin with a focus on CAD. The Fairbanks Institute will assemble and maintain a comprehensive collection of biological samples that is linked to an equally comprehensive database with clinical and disease-specific information. This creates a powerful new tool that will be available for academic and commercial research use. The Institute has been working with local health care partners and is planning for its initial subject recruitment.

The Board of the Fairbanks Institute has hired Dr. Cynthia Helphingstine to lead the organization as President and COO. Dr. Helphingstine has been interim CEO since March 2007, in addition to her role at BioCrossroads as the Translational Scientific Officer. She was previously President and CEO of Tienta Sciences, Inc. and Vice President, Business Development for Inproteo. Dr. Helphingstine earned a Ph.D. in Immunology and a BA in microbiology from the University of Missouri-Columbia. She also has an MBA from the Lake Forest School of Management in Illinois.

"The Fairbanks Institute is both the ultimate research platform and the ultimate community health project, making it an important asset for Indiana's growing life science base," said Dr. Craig Brater, Chairman of Fairbanks Institute Board of Directors and Dean of Indiana University School of Medicine. "And with Cynthia's passion and energy to lead the efforts, this collaborative venture will make a significant impact on the future of health care, not just for our local community, but for people around the world."

"This is a unique opportunity for Central Indiana to showcase national leadership in integrating clinical and epidemiological data with biological samples to enable excellent research that will lead, directly or indirectly, to new and better ways of preventing, diagnosing and treating diseases," said Helphingstine. "We're fortunate to have partners that have a strong commitment for community-based research. BioCrossroads, Eli Lilly and Company, the Indiana University School of Medicine, the Regenstrief Institute, the Family and Social Services Administration, and local public health leaders have been strong supporters of the Fairbanks Institute's efforts and will continue to play a role in the success of our initiative."

Indianapolis is an ideal hub for gathering robust health information for population-based research. It has a diverse community, which is representative of the national census, a health-challenged population (Indiana ranks high on national lists for cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes and other illnesses) and a stable residency, meaning health status of an individual can be accurately tracked over a long period of time. This population's health challenges have been studied and well documented since the early 1970s through the nationally recognized health informatics capabilities of the Regenstrief Institute at Indiana University. In addition, the area boasts strong research talent in local academic institutions and other life sciences companies.

For its first subject recruitment, which will begin later this fall in Indianapolis, the Fairbanks Institute will concentrate on cardiovascular disease, gathering biological samples from both "diseased" subjects and healthy controls for research on CAD.

The Fairbanks Institute will contribute to the advancement of the emerging science of personalized medicine by enabling researchers to find and validate biomarkers that can be used to develop new and better ways to diagnose disease and tailor drug therapy to the patient's needs. Biomarkers, involving DNA, RNA, and blood proteins, are indicators of a biological process and play an important role in the drug discovery process by allowing clinical trials to focus on those patients most likely to benefit from a new drug.

"Leveraging community partners and fostering research aimed squarely at improving the health of the Indianapolis community is an important part of the overall vision for the Fairbanks Institute," said Leonard J. Betley, Fairbanks Foundation President. "Fairbanks Institute's innovative approach to population-based research puts Indianapolis at the forefront of global efforts to better understand diseases and find new and better ways to diagnose, treat and prevent them."

Most recently, research funding provided by the Fairbanks Institute has led to the establishment of new analytical capabilities for the study of angiogenesis, or the growth of new blood vessels, at the IU Simon Cancer Center. These new techniques have already been utilized by multiple cancer researchers. Their use has contributed to a National Institute of Health (NIH) award and enabled collaboration on a study at the University of Colorado that resulted in an NIH grant submission.

About Fairbanks Institute

Formed with a $10 million gift from the Fairbanks Foundation and the collaboration of BioCrossroads, Indiana University School of Medicine, Regenstrief Institute and other Indianapolis community health leaders, Fairbanks Institute is creating one of the nation's most comprehensive resources for finding better ways to prevent, diagnose and treat the nation's common diseases. The Institute will assemble and maintain a database, linking biological samples with clinical and disease-specific information collected from the Indianapolis population for academic and commercial research use.

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