GlaxoSmithKline Seeks Cure for HIV and AIDS

By Whitney Crowe [1]
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Earlier this year, GlaxoSmithKline, a member of CSG’s Leadership Circle, announced its collaboration with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to create a center dedicated to finding a cure for HIV and AIDS. The HIV Cure center will be located on the university’s campus and is expected to attract top talent from around the world.

“The excitement of this public-private partnership lies in its vast potential,” said University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill Chancellor Carol L. Folt. “This first-of-its-kind, joint-ownership model is a novel approach toward finding a cure, and we hope it serves as an invitation to the world’s best researchers and scientists.”

GlaxoSmithKline, also known as GSK, has committed $20 million in funds and brings to the partnership expertise in medicine discovery, development and manufacturing. The university will contribute its facilities and medical research capacity and will provide access to patients and additional funds.

“Like UNC, GSK has a long legacy of HIV research success,” said GlaxoSmithKline CEO Sir Andrew Witty in a press release. “This partnership is a testament to our past and present leadership, innovation and commitment to this field.”

In addition to its financial investment of $4 million per year for the next five years, GSK will send a small research team to Chapel Hill to collaborate with the university’s researchers.

GSK and UNC-Chapel Hill jointly own Qura Therapeutics, which manages the intellectual property and business-related efforts of the partnership. GSK also owns more than three-quarters of Viiv Healthcare, a pharmaceutical company that specializes in HIV therapies and holds approximately 19 percent of the global HIV drug market.

“Although today’s treatments for HIV mean that millions of lives have been saved, people have to take a lifetime of treatments, which takes an emotional toll and places an economic burden on society that is particularly challenging in countries with limited resources,” said Zhi Hong, senior vice president and head of the Infectious Diseases Therapy Area Unit at GSK, in a May press release. “This is why we must dedicate the next 30 years to finding a cure and scaling it up so that one day we will end the HIV/AIDS epidemic.”

At the end of 2012, 1.2 million people age 13 and older were living with HIV in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The CDC also estimates that 50,000 people living in the United States will be infected with HIV each year. Worldwide, statistics provided by the World Health Organization reveal that almost 78 million people have been infected with HIV.
and nearly 39 million people have died of the virus.

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