



ICAV

International Consortium
on Anti-Virals

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

'Bird Flu is Just the Beginning...'

*International Scientists gather at Trent University
to Combat Global Pandemic*

September 15, 2005, Peterborough Ontario

ICAV – The Canadian led International Consortium on Anti-Virals, affiliated with Peterborough's Trent University, is holding a public symposium and scientific workshop September 23-25, 2005, stressing the urgent need and will for a global solution to emerging pandemic disease. Over 130 top scientists, researchers and medical experts from around the world will present on the weekend.

Founded in 2004 on the heels of the SARS crisis by a group of Canadian scientists from The Protein Engineering Network of Centres of Excellence (PENCE) including Drs. Jeremy Carver and Michel Chrétien, ICAV is comprised of experts and institutions from 15 countries. These include the Pasteur Institute (Paris, Shanghai, Hong Kong); Glycobiology Institute (Oxford University, Oxford); Médecins sans Frontières (Paris) ; Taiwan Institute of Biochemistry; Pharmaciens sans Frontières (Montreal), Scripps Institute for Medical Research (San Diego); and the Glycomics Institute, Griffiths University (Australia).

"The threat of pandemic influenza or the emergence of other viral disease outbreaks can not be predicted with any temporal certainty – but the consensus of the scientific community forecasts its inevitable strike. Avian or bird flu is just the beginning of a call to action. Responsible and comprehensive pandemic preparation is essential," says Chief Executive and Scientific Officer, Dr. Carver. "Just as essential is a general public awareness that something can be done."

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ICAV is focusing on the development of new '*enhanced spectrum anti-virals*' – and sees them as a major part of a comprehensive pandemic strategy. Targeting virus/host interaction, enhanced spectrum anti-virals will be used to treat infected individuals and their contacts, in contrast to vaccines which are used in advance of infection. Enhanced spectrum anti-virals offer the ability to protect against constantly mutating viruses. Vaccines can only be used to protect against a known virus. A vaccine developed for bird flu, for example, would not necessarily be effective against the next mutation of such a virus and new vaccines might not be available for six to 12 months. Enhanced spectrum anti-virals may breach the gap until a vaccine is available.

ICAV is mobilizing the development of anti-virals to fight emerging diseases such as pandemic influenza, as well as Hepatitis and HIV/AIDS in existing participating facilities around the globe. While the ICAV platform and business plan have both been met with positive response from multiple levels of national and international governments, ICAV still needs a firm funding commitment. With national and international government support, ICAV would see new drugs on the market within 4 years.

Dr. Art Carty, Science Advisor to Prime Minister Paul Martin says, "The 21st century health challenges are global, complex problems that necessitate a new approach to scientific research. We need to bridge the boundaries between scientific fields, institutions and geographic location to effectively mobilize scarce resources and global expertise. A prime example of this form of collaboration is the **International Consortium on Anti-Virals.**"

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