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77 New Medicines Now in Development for HIV/AIDS

Washington, D.C. (November 30, 2006) — Seventy-seven new medicines and vaccines are in development to treat HIV/AIDS and related conditions, according to a survey released today by the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA).

Recent reports show AIDS has killed more than 25 million people and infected an estimated 40 million people worldwide. As many as 1.2 million U.S. residents are estimated to have HIV infection.

“We are greatly encouraged by the new, critically-important medicines in development to treat HIV/AIDS,” said PhRMA President and CEO Billy Tauzin. “PhRMA member companies are leading the search for vaccines and treatments for this terrible disease.”

PhRMA’s survey reveals that of the 77 new medicines in development, researchers are studying 19 new vaccines and 35 antivirals. These drugs are either in human clinical trials or are awaiting approval from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Examples of other new HIV/AIDS medicines being researched include:

- One medicine, the first in a new class of drugs known as integrase inhibitors, has been shown to decrease viral load in patients with significant HIV drug resistance.
- A vaccine combines DNA snippets from the AIDS virus with a protein that boosts immune response. The vaccine may prevent infection, limit the damage the virus causes, or both.
- A medicine in development binds itself to a receptor protein found on the surface of human cells and blocks the HIV virus from entering the cell.

The survey also notes that 88 medicines to treat HIV/AIDS and related conditions have been approved since the virus that causes AIDS was first identified more than 20 years ago; the first such medicine was developed in 1987, just six years after the HIV virus was identified. The increased availability and utilization of newer prescription medicines has helped to reduce the U.S. death rate from AIDS substantially in recent years.

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Since the early 1990s, medicines also have significantly reduced mother-to-child transmission of HIV in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. And the National Institutes of Health (NIH) report that since the mid-1990s, when the first protease inhibitors (a class of anti-HIV drugs that prevent HIV-infected cells from producing new copies of the virus) were launched and combination drug therapy was introduced, the U.S. death rate from AIDS has dropped about 70 percent. New treatments have also reduced hospitalization and the total cost of care, according to a 2001 *New England Journal of Medicine* study.

Despite astounding progress, AIDS remains a devastating and growing worldwide health problem in developing countries, and particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, China, Russia and India. An estimated 38.6 million people worldwide were living with HIV at the end of 2005, with an estimated 4.1 million people becoming newly infected with HIV last year, according to the United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

From 1998 to 2004, pharmaceutical companies have contributed more than \$4.1 billion to improve health care in the developing world, according to the Partnership for Quality Medical Donations. Projects include building HIV/AIDS clinics, AIDS education and prevention programs, programs to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV, and donations of medicines for AIDS and related diseases. Companies also are providing AIDS drugs at significantly reduced prices in 18 countries.

“With HIV/AIDS medicines, a disease that was once a virtual death sentence can now be controlled and treated as if it were a chronic disease,” added Tausin. “And the new medicines our scientists are working on right now bring hope for even more promising results in the future.”

To read the report on the PhRMA Web site, click on the following link:
http://www.phrma.org/news_room/

The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) represents the country's leading pharmaceutical research and biotechnology companies, which are devoted to inventing medicines that allow patients to live longer, healthier, and more productive lives. PhRMA companies are leading the way in the search for new cures. PhRMA members alone invested an estimated \$39.4 billion in 2005 in discovering and developing new medicines. Industry-wide research and investment reached a record \$51.3 billion in 2005.

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PhRMA Internet Address: <http://www.phrma.org>

For information on how innovative medicines save lives, visit: <http://www.innovation.org>

For information on the Partnership for Prescription Assistance, visit: <http://www.pparx.org>

For information on the danger of imported drugs, visit: <http://www.buysafedrugs.info>