

OVERVIEW: The Bill & Melinda Gates Medical Research Institute

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is establishing a non-profit medical research organization that will combat diseases that disproportionately impact the poor in low- and middle-income countries by accelerating progress in translational science. The formal name of the organization will be the Bill & Melinda Gates Medical Research Institute.

The foundation anticipates that the initial focus of the institute will be to enhance the product development pipeline for malaria, tuberculosis, and enteric and diarrheal diseases.

Since 1990, the global health product development pipeline has produced dozens of high-impact interventions that have helped to save more than 100 million lives. The institute intends to build on this progress by capitalizing on novel platforms and new strategies that could increase the identification, selection, and optimization of novel candidates for drugs, vaccines, diagnostics, and medical devices.

The foundation then intends to transition potentially viable interventions to product development partners, developing country manufacturers, and others to take forward into late-stage development.

The institute will be co-located in the Seattle and Boston metropolitan regions and Penny Heaton, who currently leads the foundation's Vaccine Development and Surveillance Program, will take a senior leadership role with the institute.

It is anticipated that the institute will formally commence operations in late 2017. Over the next several years it is expected that it will scale up to employ 80-120 full-time employees supported by an annual operating budget of approximately \$100 million.

The foundation is in the early stages of planning and design for the institute, and further details will be provided toward the end of 2017. The foundation has committed to providing product development partners and funders with a detailed update on the new institute at the annual Grand Challenges meeting, which is scheduled for October in Washington, DC.

FAQ: Bill & Melinda Gates Medical Research Institute

1. Why are you launching the Bill & Melinda Gates Medical Research Institute?

As an organization guided by the principle that everyone deserves the opportunity to lead a healthy and productive life, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation believes that we must take every opportunity to accelerate the transformation of new medical discoveries into lifesaving tools. Working with partners, we have already taken strong steps in this direction by strengthening our commitment to product delivery; adopting more integrated, end-to-end approaches to product design; and working with the World Health Organization and other partners to improve the pace of regulatory review.

The institute will focus on accelerating global health product development by improving the pace of translational science – the process that translates promising scientific discoveries into potentially viable medical products. It will seek to capitalize on recent breakthroughs in medical research and identify potentially viable candidates for drugs, vaccines, diagnostics, and medical devices that could transform the fight against infectious diseases that predominantly affect populations in low- and middle-income countries.

2. Will the creation of the institute affect the foundation's existing programs?

We anticipate that the institute will work in close alignment with our existing program strategies to help them identify potentially viable medical interventions and accelerate their development. In this way, the institute will complement and support the work of our programs and help them deliver on their goals.

3. Will the creation of the institute affect how the foundation works with product development partners?

We are in the early design phase, and we are still evaluating the institute's potential impact on how we work with product development partners. We anticipate that the institute will affect how we work with a small subset of partners in specific disease research areas.

4. Where will the institute initially focus its research efforts?

The foundation expects that the institute will initially focus on identifying potentially viable interventions for enteric and diarrheal diseases, malaria, and tuberculosis. Accelerating the development of life-saving interventions for these diseases could help to dramatically reduce the global burden of infectious disease.

5. How much funding will the institute receive?

We anticipate that the institute will ultimately reach an annual funding level of \$100 million per year.

6. Who will fund the institute?

At this time, we anticipate that the foundation will fund the institute.

7. What role does the foundation see for other funders?

Governments and other funders continue to play an essential role in financing global health product development and in supporting the regulatory approval and delivery of successful product candidates. We hope that the institute will help to increase the number of potentially viable product candidates that donors, product development partners, developing country manufacturers, and others can then help move through later phases of development.

8. Who will lead the institute?

Dr. Penny Heaton, currently the foundation's Director of Vaccine Development and Surveillance, will take a senior leadership role with the institute. Other staffing decisions have not been made.

9. What is the distinction between the new institute and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI)?

CEPI is focused on accelerating the development of vaccines for emerging infectious diseases. The institute will focus on developing interventions to fight long-established epidemics, such as enteric and diarrheal diseases, malaria, and tuberculosis.

10. Where will the institute be located?

The foundation intends to co-locate the institute in the Seattle and Boston metropolitan regions.

11. How will the institute share its findings?

The institute will adhere to the foundation's [global access](#) and [open access](#) policies.

12. When will you have more information about the institute?

We remain in the early phases of concept and design, but we have promised to update product development partners and funders on significant developments over the coming months through a variety of channels. We also plan to provide a general update to product development partners and funders in conjunction with the Grand Challenges meeting in Washington, DC in October.

13. If I have my additional questions, who can answer them?

You are welcome to contact Toni Hoover by phoning +1.206.709.3100.