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Foundation for NIH Facilitates Successful Stakeholder Interaction Resulting in Key Decisions for Microbiome Research

BETHESDA, MD (March 29, 2011) – The Foundation for the National Institutes of Health (FNIH) announces a successful convention of stakeholder collaboration in support of human microbiome research initiatives at the International Human Microbiome Congress held in Vancouver, Canada.

In partnership with The International Human Microbiome Consortium, the National Institutes of Health, and a number of leading-edge sponsors and partners, FNIH joined as an organizing partner of the International Human Microbiome Congress to produce the event, raise sponsorship support and facilitate the interaction between the public and private sector.

"It is through these types of engagements that FNIH can further enable the study and understanding of the role of the human microbiome in human health and, ultimately, in preventing and treating disease," said Dr. Scott Campbell, Executive Director and CEO of the Foundation for NIH. "In addition, we brought together a number of corporations and private foundations to discuss public-private partnerships that the Foundation for NIH and NIH are pursuing to engage the private sector in transformative human microbiome research."

Discussions at the congress resulted in the International Human Microbiome Consortium agreeing to adopt common data standards to identify the key microbial strains which should be sequenced as a community resource and to create an international committee to develop standard protocols for conducting human microbiome research. An international scientific planning committee selected the presentations to highlight the most current and diverse work in the field. In particular, the congress showcased the most recent developments in the NIH Human Microbiome Project (HMP), the EU MetaHIT program and the Chinese Human Gut Microbiome –Infections initiative (HGM-I) as well as the results from many other international studies emerging from the young field of human microbiome research. Two sessions for demonstrations of computational tools for the analysis of sequence data gathered over 200 congress participants for individualized, 'hands-on' tutorials of the latest analytic techniques.

Active support for the congress included sponsorship from BGI, Danone Research, General Mills, Genome British Columbia, Genome Canada, MO BIO, OpGen, Proctor & Gamble, Rivermap DNA Laboratory, Roche and Second Genome. Media partners for the congress included Nature Reviews Gastroenterology & Hepatology and bnetTV.

"Procter & Gamble applauds both the outstanding global research presented at this year's congress and the Foundation for NIH for providing an environment where scientists can interact and exchange ideas," said Nora Zorich, Vice President, Research and Development at Procter & Gamble. "Understanding the human microbiota has great potential for improving health and well-being and P&G is a sponsor of these efforts."

For information about the International Human Microbiome Congress, partnering with FNIH, and to view videos, presentations and abstracts from the 2011 International Human Microbiome Congress please visit www.fnih.org.

About the Foundation for NIH
Established by the United States Congress to support the mission of the NIH—improving health through scientific discovery in the search for cures—the Foundation for NIH is a leader in identifying and addressing complex scientific and health issues. The foundation is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) charitable organization that raises private-sector funds for a broad portfolio of unique programs that complement and enhance NIH priorities and activities. For additional information about the Foundation for NIH, please visit www.fnih.org

About the International Human Microbiome Consortium (IHMC)
The goal of the IMHC is to work under a common set of principles and policies to study and understand the role of the human microbiome in the maintenance of health and causation of disease and to use that knowledge to improve the ability to prevent and treat disease. The Consortium's efforts are focused on generating a shared comprehensive data resource that will enable investigators to characterize the relationship between the composition of the human microbiome (or of parts of the human microbiome) and human health and disease. For additional information about the IHMC, please visit www.human-microbiome.org.

About the NIH Common Fund
The NIH Common Fund encourages collaboration and supports a series of exceptionally high impact, trans-NIH programs. These new programs are funded through the Common Fund, and managed by the NIH Office of the Director in partnership with the various NIH Institutes, Centers and Offices. Common Fund programs are designed to pursue major opportunities and gaps in biomedical research that no single NIH Institute could tackle alone, but that the agency as a whole can address to make the biggest impact possible on the progress of medical research. Additional information about the NIH Common Fund can be found at http://commonfund.nih.gov.