

Global Virus Network adds Emory University as newest Center of Excellence

Woodruff Health Sciences Center | Sept. 8, 2016



AIDS pioneer Robert Gallo, co-founder and scientific director of the Global Virus Network, delivered the Raymond Schinazi Distinguished Lecture at Emory on Sept. 1. Gallo also announced Emory's selection as the GVN's newest Center of Excellence. Pictured (left to right) are Schinazi, Gallo and Lucky Jain, professor and interim chair of the Emory Department of Pediatrics. Photo by Jack Kears.

The Global Virus Network (GVN) and Emory University announced Sept. 1 the induction of Emory as GVN's newest Center of Excellence. The GVN represents 37 Centers of Excellence and six affiliates in 25 countries and comprises foremost experts in every class of virus causing disease in humans. The network's mission is to combat current and emerging pandemic viral threats through international collaborative research, training the next generation of medical virologists, and advocacy.

The announcement was made by Robert Gallo, MD, co-founder and scientific director of GVN; Raymond Schinazi, PhD, DSc, the Frances Winship Walters Professor of Pediatrics and director of the Laboratory of Biochemical Pharmacology at Emory University; and Carlos del Rio, MD, the Hubert Professor and Chair of the Department of Global Health at the Rollins School of Public Health, professor of medicine in the Division of Infectious Diseases at Emory University School of Medicine, and co-director of the Emory Center for AIDS Research. Schinazi and del Rio will be co-directors of Emory's GVN Center of Excellence.

Emory is renowned for its leading research programs that focus on various viruses including HIV/SIV, hepatitis B and C, dengue, herpes, Zika, influenza, norovirus, Ebola, chikungunya and West Nile viruses.

"Emory has broad outstanding virology and immunology research programs, but when it comes to HIV I know of no place with more serious contributors to the field than those at Emory," said Gallo, who is co-discoverer of HIV and director of the Institute of Human Virology at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, a GVN Center of Excellence.

"From Ray Schinazi and Dennis Liotta's pioneering drug development, to Carlos del Rio and Susan Allen's important epidemiology, clinical and prevention research with some of the most vulnerable populations, to the molecular virology work of Eric Hunter and Cynthia Derdeyn, to the fundamental immunology of Max Cooper and Rafi Ahmed, to the critical studies on HIV pathogenesis of Guido Silvestri, to the vaccinology science research of Mark Mulligan and Rama Amara and unforgettably the tremendous contributions from James Curran on the early epidemiology of HIV. It is about time to have this great university as part of the GVN," Gallo said.

Schinazi said it is an honor for Emory to be included in the Global Virus Network.

"We look forward to increased collaborations with researchers around the world that can lead to new therapies and preventive strategies for the many challenging viruses we face," he said. "Institutions and scientists who work together can accomplish a great deal more than can any researcher or organization working individually."

Numerous components of Emory's Woodruff Health Sciences Center (including the Emory Vaccine Center, the Emory Center for AIDS Research, Yerkes National Primate Research Center, the Emory Global Health Institute, Emory Institute for Drug Development, Tropical Infectious Diseases Program, Virology and Molecular Biomarkers Core, Atlanta Clinical and Translational Science Institute, Prevention Research Center), and the Emory schools of medicine, public health and nursing all have contributed to the development of successful programs in virology that span basic laboratory research, clinical research, and behavioral science. Emory University has established collaborations with other Atlanta-based universities including Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech Partnership) and Morehouse School of Medicine (Prevention Research Center).

"Our programs in virology, including education, research, and patient care, have contributed to lifesaving global advances, and we are very pleased to contribute our knowledge, expertise and partnership to the future efforts of the GVN," noted del Rio.

The GVN is a global authority and resource for the identification and investigation, interpretation and explanation, control and suppression, of viral diseases posing threats to mankind. It enhances the international capacity for reactive, proactive and interactive activities that address mankind-threatening viruses and addresses a global need for coordinated virology training, developing scholarly exchange programs for recruiting and training young scientists in medical virology. The GVN also serves as a resource to governments and international organizations seeking advice about viral disease threats, prevention or response strategies and GVN advocates for research and training on virus infections and their many disease manifestations.

Gallo also presented the Raymond Schinazi Distinguished Lecture on Sept. 1, discussing "Virus Epidemics with Special Emphasis on HIV and AIDS: Reflections on the Past and Prospects for the Future" at Emory's Health Sciences Research Building Auditorium.