

Global Virus Network (GVN) Announces Seven Distinguished International Appointments to Board of Directors

World leaders in business & science are committed to supporting the GVN

Baltimore, MD (March 22, 2017) – The Global Virus Network (GVN), a coalition of the world’s leading medical virology research centers working together to prevent illness and death from viral disease, today announced the addition of seven distinguished global leaders to its Board of Directors, including **Lawrence Blatt, PhD**, Global Head of Infectious Diseases, Jansen Pharmaceuticals and President and CEO, Alios Biopharma; **Peter Palese, PhD**, Horace W. Goldsmith Professor and Chair Department of Microbiology, Professor, Department of Medicine Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai; **Pierluigi Petrone, CEO**, Petrone Group; **Guangqi Tian, President**, Sino Invest Group Limited; **Guy Vernet, PhD**, Scientific Director, Fondation Mérieux; **Danny Wong, Founder** and Chairman, Medisun and Chairman, Beijing Financial Group Limited; and, **Koichi Yamanishi, MD**, Director General, Research Foundation for Microbial Diseases of Osaka University (Biken). The announcement was made today by Robert Gallo, MD, Co-founder and Director, Global Virus Network (GVN) and Homer & Martha Gudelsky Distinguished Professor in Medicine, Director, Institute of Human Virology at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, a GVN Center of Excellence.

“GVN will benefit greatly with each new Board members’ expertise and tremendous success in leading prosperous organizations and ventures around the globe,” said Robert Gallo, MD, who is world renowned for his co-discovery of HIV as the cause of AIDS and development of the HIV blood test. “We look forward to working with our new and current board members as we expand GVN’s collaborations with government entities, the public and private sectors, and most recently with the pharmaceutical industry to advance biomedical research and train the next generation of medical virologists while addressing the world’s most pressing viral threats, such as Zika, Ebola, influenza, and HIV to name a few.”

“I am pleased and honored to be joining the GVN Board, whose mission to address global public health threats relating to established and emerging viruses, is well aligned to my personal goals and aspirations,” said Lawrence Blatt, PhD, Global Head of Infectious Diseases, Jansen Pharmaceuticals and President and CEO, Alios Biopharma both in San Francisco, CA, USA. “Viral infections account for significant morbidity and mortality throughout the world and the GVN is establishing a worldwide community to facilitate cooperation among physicians, scientists and healthcare workers.” Dr. Blatt has spent the last 30 years working in drug research and development with a specific focus on biology of the immune system, antiviral therapies and relevant therapeutic interventions including among other discoveries the development of Danoprevir®, an HCV protease inhibitor, in partnership with Roche.

“The question regarding novel emerging viral pathogens is not if – but when,” said Peter Palese, PhD, Horace W. Goldsmith Professor and Chair, Department of Microbiology, Professor, Department of Medicine, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York, NY, USA. Dr. Palese’s groundbreaking research includes designing the next-generation of flu vaccines that

provoke a more robust and durable immune response to a wide variety of influenza viruses – a feat that aims to produce a broadly protective universal vaccine that not only saves lives but eliminates the need for annual revaccination and associated costs. Dr. Palese is also Director of the GVN Center of Excellence at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai and a Member of the National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Medicine (IOM).

“I am proud and happy to join this interesting and motivating Board of Directors,” said Pierluigi Petrone, CEO, Petrone Group, a Naples, Italy holding company of approximately 30 firms operating in the pharmaceutical and health sectors. “I will try to liaise scientific evidences with manufacturing processes, allowing pharmaceutical companies to approach new useful products to move forward against dangerous and undiscovered infections worldwide.” Mr. Petrone is also Chairman of STM Group Logistica Integrata and a Business Relation Officer of Pierrel S.p.A which collectively encompass the life science, biopharma and pharmaceutical industries.

“As basic biomedical and behavioral research make it possible to more accurately characterize the causes of viral disease onset and progression, I am honored to serve the GVN with all my knowledge and energy to accelerate the process of scientific discovery and research to development and optimization of therapeutics to test in human trials, ultimately, to the application of the approved therapy, device, or diagnostic in the real world,” said Guangqi Tian, President, Sino Invest Group Limited. Mr. Tian founded multiple companies in cities in China including Harbin, Tianjin, and Beijing since 2005 and owns businesses in Beijing, Tianjin, Hong Kong, U.S., Panama, and Dubai which include international trade and investment.

“I am convinced that it is only by gathering experts and leaders from different disciplines, from the public and private sectors, in networks like the GVN that we will defeat deadly viral diseases,” said Guy Vernet, PhD, Fondation Mérieux, USA. “Laboratories and diagnostics are key components of public health response to epidemic infectious diseases, especially in resource-limited, tropical countries and I am honored to have a chance to contribute, with my experience in this domain, to the objectives of the GVN.” Dr. Vernet has been Director General of the Pasteur Institute in Yaoundé, Cameroon and Scientific Director of Fondation Mérieux in Lyon, France. He previously held several positions within the R&D Department of bioMérieux, and led many research projects with the goal to improve the diagnosis of major human pathologies, particularly HIV infection, hepatitis and tuberculosis.

“Today’s rapid spread of viral diseases in the world endangers human health, and it is critical to pull together all the resources we have to reduce and eliminate the threat by conducting more cutting-edge R&D and translational medicine,” said Danny Wong, Founder and Chairman, Medisun and Chairman, Beijing Financial Group Limited. “I am thrilled to join the GVN alongside others to tackle this issue.” Mr. Wong has over 20 years of experience in investment including successfully launching dozens of high-tech companies in Hong Kong and founding the first venture capital company in China.

“I am pleased to join the GVN Board of Directors and advance the mission of the GVN in its efforts to combat viral threats,” said Koichi Yamanishi, MD, Director General, Research

Foundation for Microbial Diseases of Osaka University (Biken) in Osaka, Japan. “I look forward to working with my colleagues in Japan and Asia to expand collaborative efforts established during GVN’s annual meeting held in Sapporo last fall.” Dr. Yamanishi’s laboratory studies includes novel advances in both human herpes virus (HHV) research, especially HHV-6, and varicella zoster virus.

While new Board members will advise the GVN on many issues, they will also lead efforts in their areas of expertise. Dr. Lawrence Blatt will garner business, financial and scientific support for viral therapies; Dr. Peter Palese will garner business, financial and scientific support in influenza initiatives, in addition to his responsibilities as a GVN Center of Excellence Director; Mr. Pierluigi Petrone will garner business and financial support from manufacturers globally; Mr. Guangqi Tian will garner business, financial and scientific support in China; Dr. Guy Vernet will garner business, financial and scientific support for diagnosis of viral diseases globally and especially resource-limited countries; Mr. Danny Wong will garner business, financial and scientific support in Asia; and, Dr. Koichi Yamanishi will cultivate business, financial and scientific relationships in Japan and Asia.