



Representative Louise M. Slaughter
Chairwoman, House Committee on Rules
Representing New York's 28th District

P R E S S R E L E A S E

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Rep. Slaughter Announces \$3 Million for Hauptman Woodward Medical Research Institute

BUFFALO, NY – Congresswoman Louise M. Slaughter (D-Fairport), Chairwoman of the House Rules Committee, today joined Dr. George DeTitta, CEO of Hauptman Woodward, Dr. Wayne Schultz, research scientist and head of the structural biology lab, and research scientist Dr. Timothy Umland, to announce \$3 million in federal funds to conduct research on how viruses mutate and transfer between animals and humans.

Rep. Slaughter secured the funding in the FY 2008 Department of Defense Appropriations Bill for a study on the danger of animal to human transfer of disease.

“The Buffalo-Niagara region is well known as a leader in cutting edge scientific research, and with this funding, we will continue that distinction,” said Rep. Slaughter. **“This Hauptman Woodward project not only has the potential to save hundreds, if not thousands of lives, but will attract world class scientists to our community and bolster our local economy.”**

“We are grateful to Congresswoman Slaughter for her support in securing this funding for Hauptman-Woodward’s research. Her scientific background and her belief in what we do here has been the basis for a solid working relationship,” **Dr. George DeTitta, Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director, said.** **“The structural biology tools and methods which were developed at Hauptman-Woodward and our previous experience working with the SARS virus uniquely position our laboratory to carry out the study of animal-derived viruses and make an important contribution to public health.”**

“As populations expand and the military travels to new parts of the world, the potential exposure to dangerous animal-borne viruses is increasing. The purpose of this research is to understand the fundamental principles that allow viruses to jump from animals to humans,” **Dr. Wayne Schultz, Hauptman-Woodward research scientist and head of the structural biology laboratory, said.**

“Based on a foundation of work with SARS, we will use this new funding to expand the scope of our project to provide a detailed structure-based analysis of the virus-host interactions critical to viral species jumping,” **Dr. Timothy Umland, Hauptman-Woodward research scientist, said.** **“Future development of broad-spectrum treatments for viruses will be an important contribution resulting from this research.”**

The long-term goal of this project is to develop tests, vaccines, and broad-spectrum anti-virals to deal with pandemic threats which affect vulnerable populations such as those found in military settings and densely populated communities.

BACKGROUND:

Historically, pandemics have most severely devastated people in compact living conditions, such as those found in the army, navy, air force, and marine corps., as well as, in highly-populated cities. When a new virus hits, it is imperative there be a rapid response to help save lives.

Many infectious diseases, including severe pandemics, have emerged when an animal virus acquires the ability to infect humans. The Spanish Flu of 1918, AIDS, and SARS are all real and stark reminders of the threat posed when a virus crosses from animals to humans.

With more than 50 years of exceptional scientific research, HWI is an internationally-renowned independent, non-profit facility specializing in the area of fundamental biomedical research known as structural biology. HWI's team of more than 75 staff members is committed to improving human health by studying the causes of diseases, as well as potential therapies, at their basic molecular level. HWI are located in the heart of the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus in downtown Buffalo, New York, in a new state-of-the-art structural biology research center at 700 Ellicott Street. For more information, visit HWI's website at www.hwi.buffalo.edu or call 716-898-8600.

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