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Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC), the Human Vaccines Project, and the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI) have announced that VUMC has become the Project's first scientific hub.

Incubated by IAVI, the Human Vaccines Project is a new public-private partnership that brings together leading academic research centers, industry, governments and nonprofits to accelerate the development of vaccines and immunotherapies against infectious diseases and cancers by decoding the human immune system.

"We are delighted that Vanderbilt University Medical Center will bring its world-class vaccine research and human immunology expertise to the Human Vaccines Project," said Wayne C. Koff, IAVI Chief Scientific Officer and the Project's Founder.

Under the collaboration, VUMC has pledged a multi-year commitment toward the Project which will include a large-scale global effort to decipher the "Human Immunome," the basic components of the human immune system, to enhance design of next-generation vaccines and immunotherapies.

"We are pleased to be the Project's flagship scientific partner. Vanderbilt's longstanding commitment to vaccine research and development will allow us to make valuable contributions toward accelerating the creation of new vaccines and therapies necessary to fight significant diseases," said Jeff Balser, M.D. Ph.D., Vanderbilt University's Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs

and Dean of the School of Medicine.

The Human Vaccines Project has been incubating over the last year at IAVI, as part of IAVI's commitment to pursuing innovative approaches to accelerate HIV vaccine development. Going forward, VUMC will become the first of several scientific hubs located at leading global academic research centers that will carry out the Human Vaccines Project's Scientific Plan under long-term collaborations.

"IAVI has been proud to incubate this exciting project with catalytic support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and GSK. It has great potential to advance efforts to develop safe and effective vaccines for HIV as well as other global health priorities," said IAVI CEO Margie McGlynn.

Over the last five years, new technologies including genomics, systems biology and bioinformatics have revolutionized human immune monitoring capabilities and offer the potential to transform vaccine and immunotherapy development and, in doing so, change the face of global disease prevention and control.

"Vaccine and immunotherapy development is entering a new era, and large scale global research efforts such as the Human Vaccines Project linking industry and academia offer the potential to greatly impact human health," said Moncef Slaoui, IAVI Board Member and Chairman, Global Vaccines, GlaxoSmithKline.