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**MEDIA RELEASE | JUNE 5, 2012**

**UBC drug formulation receives \$1.1 million for clinical development as HIV treatment**

A drug delivery system developed through the University of British Columbia's Neglected Global Diseases Initiative and licensed to iCo Therapeutics Inc. will receive \$1.1 million from the National Research Council of Canada (NRC) for clinical development as a treatment for HIV patients.

The oral drug delivery system of Amphotericin B (Amp B) was originally developed by UBC Pharmaceutical Sciences Profs. Kishor and Ellen Wasan to address challenges associated with existing formulations in treating individuals with visceral leishmaniasis in the developing world.

Recent studies have shown that Oral Amp B can enhance the efficacy of existing HIV therapies such as highly active anti-retroviral therapy (HAART).

While HAART has been successful in managing and stabilizing HIV in patients, the virus can persist by slowly replicating in tissue and blood. These long-lived HIV reservoirs enable long-term persistence of the infection and constitute a major roadblock to the complete eradication of HIV.

Amp B has now been shown to be efficient in "flushing" the virus from the reservoirs and enhancing the effectiveness of existing therapies.

"We are excited about the potential that oral Amp B may have as a treatment for HIV and thank the National Research Council of Canada and iCo Therapeutics for supporting this important technology," says Kishor Wasan, professor and associate dean of research and graduate studies in the UBC Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences. "This funding represents a significant leap forward in the clinical development of the oral formulation of Amp B."

"The development of the Oral Amp B technology has profound implications in the quest to find a cure for HIV," says Andrew Rae, president and CEO of iCo Therapeutics. "We are looking forward to collaborating with UBC and NRC-IRAP on this program and the continued development of the Oral Amp B system."



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## BACKGROUND | Oral Amp B as HIV treatment

The \$1.1-million support is provided via the NRC Industrial Research Assistance Program, which is a part of the Canadian HIV Vaccine Initiative's Canadian HIV Technology Development Program (CHTD). The Canadian HIV Vaccine Initiative (CHVI) is a joint program of the Government of Canada and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Vancouver-based iCo Therapeutics Inc. focuses on reformulating medications with a clinical history for new and expanded indications.

The Neglected Global Diseases Initiative at UBC (NGDI-UBC) brings together the technical expertise and perspectives of a variety of disciplines at UBC – including bench science, pharmaceutical and health research, business, social policy, and law – to develop interventions for neglected global diseases and ensure their delivery to those in need. For more information, visit [www.ngdi.ubc.ca](http://www.ngdi.ubc.ca).

For more information on Oral Amp B and the NGDI, visit <http://www.publicaffairs.ubc.ca/?p=15073> and <http://ngdi.ubc.ca>.