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Coalition of Leaders in Science and Research Commend Obama Administration for Commitment to Medical Innovation During 'First 100 Days'

As the U.S. confronts a potential pandemic disease, the Council for American Medical Innovation says President is on track, urges Congress to support innovation agenda

WASHINGTON, D.C. (April 29, 2009) – As the United States confronts the possibility of the first flu pandemic in more than 50 years, the Council for American Medical Innovation today commended President Obama for his commitment to medical innovation since taking office 100 days ago.

“The Swine Flu outbreak has re-awakened America to the urgency of medical progress – but the President has been supporting medical progress since day one,” said former Congressman Richard Gephardt, President of the Council. “He should be applauded for his foresight on this issue.”

President Obama has already set significant goals for U.S. investment in medical innovation. On Monday, he told the National Academies of Science, “I am here today to set this goal: we will devote more than three percent of our GDP to research and development. We will not just meet, but we will exceed the level achieved at the height of the Space Race, through policies that invest in basic and applied research, create new incentives for private innovation, promote breakthroughs in energy and medicine, and improve education in math and science.”

Since taking office, President Obama has created the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology, challenged America's research community to find a cure for cancer, opened new doors for discovery through stem cell research, allocated millions of economic stimulus dollars for basic research, and committed to improving science and math education to ensure a strong pipeline of researchers in future generations of Americans.

“As our nation continues to face public health crises -- from swine flu to obesity to chronic disease -- there has never been a better time to make medical innovation a top priority,” said Gephardt. “Science and discovery will save lives while leading our country back to economic prosperity, and we urge Congress to support the President's commitment to policies that protect and advance American medical innovation.”

Historically, the U.S. has led the world in medical innovation and scientific discovery, which bring life-saving treatments to patients and create millions of high-paying American jobs. However, recent data show that the U.S. is beginning to fall behind. According to a 2007 report by the Council on Competitiveness, in the past 25 years:

- The U.S. share of global R&D investment declined from 46% to 37%
- The U.S. share of global patents decreased from 54% to 52%
- The U.S. share of scientific publications fell from 38% to 30%
- The U.S. share of scientific researchers fell from 41% to 29%

- The number of bachelor's degrees in science and engineering in the U.S. decreased by 10%
- The number of new doctorates in science and engineering in the U.S. decreased 30%

"I believe it is not in our character, American character, to follow — but to lead. And it is time for us to lead once again," said the President on Monday. "Science is more essential for our prosperity, our security, our health, our environment, and our quality of life than it has ever been."

About the Council for American Medical Innovation

The United States faces serious challenges to maintaining its leadership position in innovation. The Council for American Medical Innovation is bringing together leaders in research, medicine, public health, academia, education, labor, and business, who are working in partnership toward a national policy agenda aimed at preserving U.S. leadership in medical innovation. American medical innovators create millions of high-paying jobs, and their discoveries are integral in the fight to cure cancer and other illnesses. The Council for American Medical Innovation views leadership in medical innovation as a key part of America's economic recovery, future prosperity and health.

For more information on the Council for American Medical Innovation, visit www.americanmedicalinnovation.org.

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