



ALBERT B. SABIN VACCINE INSTITUTE, INC.

Dedicated to Disease Prevention

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Polio, Measles Eradication Leader *Ciro de Quadros* Receives Albert B. Sabin Gold Medal

Calls for Stronger Preventive Health Infrastructure in Developing Countries

Washington, DC -- *Ciro A. de Quadros*, who played central roles in the eradication of polio from the Western Hemisphere and the ongoing measles eradication effort in the Americas, became the eighth recipient of the Albert Sabin Gold Medal at a ceremony in Washington, DC this evening. He is director of the Division of Vaccines and Immunization at the Pan American Health Organization. The Albert B. Sabin Vaccine Institute awards the medal annually to an exemplary contributor to disease prevention.

"*Ciro de Quadros* is an extraordinary physician, scientist and public servant," said H. R. Shepherd, chairman of the Sabin Vaccine Institute. "His entire career has been devoted to continuing Albert Sabin's quest to conquer disease with vaccines and immunization. He has led successful efforts to eradicate smallpox and polio. He has shared his talents with the world, treating patients in clinics, directing complex multinational immunization programs, advising the heads of the world's top health agencies, teaching future physicians and public health specialists, and publishing extensively in leading scientific journals."

STRONGER HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDED TO COMBAT DISEASE

Noting that "vaccines are the most cost-effective medical intervention available," Dr. de Quadros said the major challenge to disease prevention in developing countries "is the stage of development of the health infrastructure, as well as the level of priority accorded to preventive medicine." He addressed his remarks to 400 of the world's leading vaccine scientists and public health officials attending the Third Annual Conference on Vaccine Research.

"We need to work very hard not only to provide immunization for all, but also to make sure that enough resources are available so that the health infrastructure in developing countries is strengthened, and that health is seen as an investment in human capital," Dr. de Quadros said. "We need to make heads of state understand that healthy people are an essential component for the achievement of social and economic development."

THE VACCINE CENTURY

Dr. de Quadros cited the complete eradication of smallpox and nearly complete eradication of polio throughout the world as two of the "greatest gifts to humankind," and the "biotechnology revolution" as an engine producing new vaccines "that will be easier to administer." He predicted "that the 21st century will be known as the 'Century of

Vaccines' because we will certainly have many, many vaccines that just one or two decades ago were simply wild dreams of vaccine researchers." He noted ongoing HIV/AIDS, cancer and malaria vaccine development efforts.

SABIN'S LEGACY

Breakthroughs often are the result of "one person, a persistent researcher burrowing away in some laboratory, undiscouraged by failure, trying again and again to reach the final goal. There is no better example of this than Albert Sabin. Not only did Sabin's oral polio vaccine bring hope to legions of people frightened by the prospect of paralytic polio, but estimates suggest that in the first two years of worldwide use, Dr. Sabin's vaccine prevented nearly 500,000 deaths and five million cases of polio." Efforts to develop new vaccines and expand immunization to all corners of the world prevent incalculable human suffering and produce measurable economic benefits, Dr. de Quadros said. "For every \$1 spent on immunization, at least \$14 are saved because future diseases are prevented."

GLOBAL HEALTH LEADERSHIP

Dr. de Quadros earned his medical degree in Brazil in 1966 and his master of public health in 1968. He participated in the organization of the first National Epidemiology Center in Brazil, and was involved in strategy development for the containment of smallpox there. In February 1970, he joined the World Health Organization as chief epidemiologist for the Smallpox Eradication Program in Ethiopia. After detecting the last case of smallpox there in 1976, he joined the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) to initiate the Expanded Program on Immunization for the Americas.

At PAHO, Dr. de Quadros led the successful initiative that eradicated poliomyelitis from the Western Hemisphere; the last case of naturally occurring polio was detected in 1991 in Peru. He has served as special advisor to the director general of the WHO, and was a member of the Task Force for Child Survival and Development and the Institute of Medicine Committee on Microbial Threats to Health.

BACKGROUND

The Sabin Vaccine Institute is a nonprofit think tank dedicated to disease prevention. Its mission is to prevent disease by stimulating development of new vaccines and by increasing immunization rates. It has offices in New Canaan, Connecticut and Rockville, Maryland.

Previous recipients of the Albert Sabin Gold Medal include Dr. Henderson; Robert M. Chanock (National Institutes of Health); Joseph L. Melnick (Baylor College of Medicine); Maurice R. Hilleman (Merck & Co., Inc.); Myron M. Levine (University of Maryland); Allen C. Steere (Tufts University); and Philip K. Russell (Malaria Vaccine Initiative).

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