



NEWS RELEASE

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USAMRIID-NIAID ANNOUNCE RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP AT FORT DETRICK

Officials from the Army and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) briefed state and local officials today on plans for a major biomedical research partnership at Fort Detrick in Frederick, Maryland.

As a result of a Congressional mandate and anticipated funding, the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases (USAMRIID) and the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) will become partners in conducting biodefense research. NIAID and USAMRIID have had a productive relationship over the years working on biodefense related diagnostics, drugs and vaccine research, and this effort located at Fort Detrick will uniquely marshal research capabilities while consolidating resources in response to the nation's changing needs.

USAMRIID intends to expand its current facilities and continue its critical mission of research on drugs, vaccines and diagnostics to safeguard the health of the nation's armed forces. As part of the need for additional, accelerated research programs in biodefense for the civilian population, NIAID plans to build a laboratory adjacent to USAMRIID.

The agencies have begun the complex process of planning and designing the new facilities, to be located at an existing secure site within Fort Detrick, and expect construction to take place over the next several years. The new NIAID facility will be a Biosafety laboratory comprised of Biosafety Level (BSL) 2, 3 and 4 areas that will allow researchers to study disease-causing microbes that may be used as agents of bioterrorism. Both NIAID and USAMRIID scientists have had extensive experience with research in BSL 3 and 4 laboratories for approximately 30 years.

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Construction of new facilities will comply with the National Environmental Policy Act, which requires an assessment of potential human health and environmental impacts. Documents addressing the impacts of new construction will be available in public libraries and on the web for review and comment. Publication and community meeting dates will be announced in local newspapers.

NIAID is a component of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) within the Department of Health and Human Services. NIAID conducts and supports basic and applied research to prevent, diagnose, and treat infectious and immune-mediated illnesses, including HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, illness from potential agents of bioterrorism, tuberculosis, malaria, autoimmune disorders, asthma and allergies.

USAMRIID conducts basic and applied research on biological threats resulting in medical solutions to protect the warfighter. As the Department of Defense's lead laboratory for medical aspects of biological warfare defense, USAMRIID collaborates with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institutes of Health, the World Health Organization, the Department of Energy, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and academic centers of excellence worldwide. USAMRIID also serves as a reference laboratory for the CDC and the WHO.

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