



[National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases \(NIAID\)](#)

FOR IMMEDIATE  
RELEASE  
Monday, May 9, 2005

CONTACT:  
[NIAID News Office](#)  
301-402-1663

[E-mail this page](#)  
 [Subscribe](#)

## **NIAID Awards First \$27 Million Using New Bioshield Authorities Authorities Also Used to Hire Associate Director for Biodefense Product Development**

The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), has awarded 10 grants and 2 contracts totaling approximately \$27 million to fund development of new therapeutics and vaccines against some of the most deadly agents of bioterrorism including anthrax, botulinum toxin, Ebola virus, pneumonic plague, smallpox and tularemia.

These awards are the first made by NIAID using authorities provided by Project Bioshield, which was signed into law on July 21, 2004. Project Bioshield gives federal agencies new tools to accelerate research on medical countermeasures to safeguard Americans against chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear attack. These first grants and contracts, which range in duration from 12 to 18 months, respond to a key objective of the NIAID biodefense research agenda that emphasizes the development of new and improved medical products against "Category A" agents — those biological agents considered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to pose the greatest threat to national security.

"Project Bioshield enables us to expedite research and development of critical medical countermeasures based on promising recent scientific discoveries," says Anthony S. Fauci, M.D., director of NIAID. "These product development awards, focused on the most serious potential agents of bioterror, will help to rapidly translate laboratory findings into new therapies."

The 10 institutions receiving grants and the principal investigator at each are:

- **The Scripps Research Institute**, La Jolla, CA, Kim Janda, Ph.D. *Focus*: identification of drugs that reverse paralysis caused by botulinum toxin

- **Apath LLC**, St. Louis, MO, Paul Olivo, M.D., Ph.D. *Focus*: development of new antiviral drugs for Ebola infection
- **Veterans Affairs San Diego Healthcare System**, Karl Hostetler, M.D. *Focus*: development of a new antiviral drug against smallpox
- **Arizona State University**, Tempe, AZ, Bertram Jacobs, Ph.D. *Focus*: optimization of smallpox vaccine's protective effect when given after exposure to the virus
- **NovoBiotic Pharmaceuticals LLC**, Cambridge, MA, Losee Ling, Ph.D. *Focus*: development of new drugs against the bacterium that causes anthrax
- **Children's Hospital Oakland Research Institute**, Oakland, CA, Donald Reason, Ph.D. *Focus*: development of antibodies to be used as post-exposure anthrax therapy
- **Nanotherapeutics Inc.**, Alachua, FL, James Talton, Ph.D. *Focus*: development of single-dose disposable inhalers of two antibiotics for immediate, post-exposure protection against pneumonic plague and tularemia
- **University of Chicago**, Wei-Jen Tang, Ph.D. *Focus*: development of a therapy that blocks the action of anthrax edema toxin, which produces severe swelling in human cells
- **MaxThera Inc.**, Reading, MA, Ania Knap, Ph.D. *Focus*: identification of new antibacterial agents against a broad spectrum of potential bioterror pathogens
- **Veritas Inc.**, Rockville, MD, George Oyler, M.D., Ph.D. *Focus*: development of several tests used to screen tens of thousands of drugs to identify those that inhibit the activity of botulinum neurotoxin

The two institutions receiving contracts and the principal investigator at each are:

- **XOMA (US) LLC**, Berkeley, CA, Marc Better, Ph.D. *Focus*: development and production of antibodies that protect against botulinum toxin type A
- **DVC Dynport LLC**, Frederick, MD, Ian Henderson, PhD. *Focus*: production of a vaccine candidate against botulinum toxin type E. There are seven known types of botulinum toxin: A, B, C, D, E, F and G. Each has different properties and actions, with types A, B and E considered by scientists to be the most serious threats to public health

NIAID also announced today the appointment of Michael G. Kurilla, M.D., Ph.D., to the dual positions of NIAID Associate Director for Biodefense Product Development, and Director of the Office of Biodefense Research Activities within NIAID's Division of Microbiology and Infectious Diseases. Dr. Kurilla's primary role will be to provide overall Institute coordination

for advanced product development of medical countermeasures against bioterror threats. His appointment was made using Bioshield authorities that enable NIAID to streamline the hiring of qualified scientists to carry out the national medical countermeasure research and development program. For more information on Project Bioshield, visit <http://www2.niaid.nih.gov/Biodefense/Public/projectbioshield.htm>.

*NIAID is a component of the National Institutes of Health, an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIAID supports basic and applied research to prevent, diagnose and treat infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections, influenza, tuberculosis, malaria and illness from potential agents of bioterrorism. NIAID also supports research on transplantation and immune-related illnesses, including autoimmune disorders, asthma and allergies.*

News releases, fact sheets and other NIAID-related materials are available on the NIAID Web site at <http://www.niaid.nih.gov/>.

---

**Note:** This news release was updated on May 10, 2005. The updates were to the amount awarded and to the research focus of XOMA (US) LLC and DVC Dynport LLC.

---



[Home](#) > [News & Events](#)

[E-mail this page](#)

[Subscribe](#) to receive future NIH news releases.