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MEDIA CONTACT: Jim Pickett
m: +1 (773) 600-6407, jpickett@aidschicago.org

International Rectal Microbicide Advocates Release Update on New HIV Prevention Technology
New Report Outlines the Growing Field of Rectal Microbicide Research and Development

CHICAGO – International Rectal Microbicide Advocates (IRMA) will officially release its third landmark report– “From Promise to Product: Advancing Rectal Microbicide Research and Advocacy” – at the *2010 International Microbicides Conference* in Pittsburgh, PA taking place May 22 – 25, 2010. The ambitious, comprehensive document reports on the growing scientific activity in the rectal microbicide field, capturing the optimism among researchers and advocates alike as the field sets its sights on the development of safe and effective rectal-specific products that will provide protection against HIV during anal intercourse.

Additionally, IRMA continues to call for a Global Rectal Microbicide Development plan by which stakeholders can coordinate efforts across the full range of scientific activities, developing strategies and setting priorities. Such a plan does not yet exist.

Dr. Ian McGowan, Scientific Vice-Chair on the IRMA Steering Committee and co-Principal Investigator of the Microbicide Trials Network says, “A detailed map such as a Global Rectal Microbicide Development Plan is absolutely necessary if we are going to make the best use of each and every research dollar in this time of global recession and constricted resources.”

An updated resource tracking of funds specifically allocated to rectal microbicide research and development – the only such exercise – is followed by a call for escalating funding over the next 10 years and for increased diversity in the funding portfolio as well. The United States National Institutes of Health currently provides over 90% of global resources devoted to rectal microbicide activities, and nations of the European Union and global philanthropic organizations need to support this critical work as well.

“Increased funding is also needed for IRMA. We maintain an enormous global footprint and are the only advocacy group focused on rectal microbicides in the world – and we achieve this with inadequate resources,” says IRMA Chair and Director of Advocacy for the AIDS Foundation of Chicago Jim Pickett. “Our work must be valued and supported if we are to continue uniting AIDS advocates, scientists, and policy makers around the globe to bring safe and effective rectal microbicides to market as well as to confront the homophobia, gender inequities, human rights, stigma, and denial that must be addressed to make sure such products will be used.”

The full report is available as a PDF online in English rectalmicrobicides.org/materials.php and in Spanish rectalmicrobicides.org/latin.php.

Founded in 2005 and housed at the AIDS Foundation of Chicago (www.aidschicago.org), IRMA is a network of nearly 1,000 advocates, scientists, policy makers, and funders from over 60 countries working together to advance a robust rectal microbicide research and development agenda - with the goal of creating safe, effective, acceptable and accessible rectal microbicides for the women and men around the world who engage in anal intercourse. IRMA works to confront the institutional, socio-cultural and political stigma around the public health need for rectal microbicide research, and to increase funding and commitment within this field of inquiry. Learn more at www.rectalmicrobicides.org.

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