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Physicians and Scientists Hail Choice of Thomas Frieden to Head the CDC

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The Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA), HIV Medicine Association (HIVMA), and the IDSA/HIVMA Center for Global Health Policy applaud President Barack Obama for his appointment of Thomas Frieden, MD, as director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (CDC)

Dr. Frieden's experience—as an epidemiologist, an administrator, a researcher and a clinician—make him an outstanding choice to lead the CDC at this critical moment in protecting America's public health. Dr. Frieden will bring to the CDC unwavering dedication, immense talents, and a strong track record of battling deadly epidemics, such as tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, and most recently the 2009 Influenza A: H1N1 virus that threatens to spark the next influenza pandemic.

“Thomas Frieden demonstrated extraordinary vision, leadership and organizational ability in containing the multidrug resistant TB epidemic in New York in the early 1990s,” said Richard Chaisson, MD, a member of the Global Center's advisory committee and director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Tuberculosis Research. “He then took that expertise to India, where he transformed that nation's TB program, creating a model for the world and saving hundreds of thousands of lives as a consequence. His commitment to using scientific approaches to disease control will serve the nation well. He is an outstanding choice to lead the CDC.”

Roy Gulick, MD, chief of the infectious diseases division at Weill Medical College of Cornell University and a member of HIVMA, said Dr. Frieden will be a forceful advocate for putting evidenced-based science into practice in the battle against HIV/AIDS.

“As health commissioner of New York City, Tom Frieden increased community services for the infected community. He emphasized prevention by promoting needle exchange and condom use. He worked hard to promote routine HIV testing so that more New Yorkers would know their status. He worked closely with HIV providers to monitor the HIV epidemic in New York and reached out to communities of color,” Dr. Gulick said. “With his training in infectious diseases and public health and his track record as New York City health commissioner, he is an outstanding choice for director of the CDC—he certainly will make a difference for those infected and affected by HIV in the U.S.”

“As an infectious disease physician and a New Yorker, I have been incredibly impressed with Dr. Frieden's response to the recent Influenza A H1N1 outbreak and previous outbreaks of other diseases. Given the potential for an influenza pandemic, all of us should take comfort in having him at the helm at CDC,” said Anne Gershon, MD, president of IDSA and a pediatric infectious disease specialist at Columbia University College of Physicians in New York. “He will be a standout at CDC, but we will miss him in New York.”

To arrange an interview with Drs. Chaisson, Gershon or other disease experts, please contact Deirdre Shesgreen at 703-740-4954

The Center for Global Health Policy is an organization of physicians and scientists dedicated to promoting the effective use of U.S. funding for addressing the global HIV/AIDS and TB epidemics by providing scientific and policy information to policymakers, federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, and

the media. The Center, a project of the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) and its sister organization, the HIV Medicine Association (HIVMA), is based in Arlington, Va.

IDSA is a professional society representing more than 8,600 infectious diseases physicians and scientists devoted to patient care, education, research, prevention, and public health. HIVMA is the professional home for more than 3,600 physicians, scientists and other health care professionals dedicated to the field of HIV/AIDS. Nested within IDSA, HIVMA promotes quality in HIV care and advocates policies that ensure a comprehensive and humane response to the AIDS pandemic informed by science and social justice.