



For Immediate Release

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USAID AWARDS \$5 MILLION TO CONRAD FOR DEVELOPMENT OF A HIGHLY EFFECTIVE CONTRACEPTIVE WITH POTENTIAL TO PREVENT HIV SEXUAL INFECTION

Grant to fund studies of dual protection products for women

Arlington, VA – November 2, 2010 – CONRAD, leaders in reproductive health and HIV prevention research, today announced a \$5 million award from the US Agency for International Development (USAID). The grant will fund research and development of vaginal rings that are contraceptive and also prevent HIV and STI infections.

USAID provided funding for the CAPRISA 004 trial of tenofovir gel, conducted by the Centre for Programme Research for AIDS in South Africa (CAPRISA), which was the first study to show that a vaginal gel can reduce the risk of HIV and herpes infection in women. CONRAD manufactured and provided the tenofovir gel for the study. Tenofovir gel was found to be 39% effective in reducing a woman's risk of becoming infected with HIV during sex and 51% effective in preventing genital herpes infections in the women participating in the trial. The FDA recently granted Fast Track approval designation for tenofovir gel, pending confirmatory results from the NIH-sponsored Phase IIB study, MTN-003, known as VOICE (Vaginal and Oral Interventions to Control the Epidemic.) CONRAD's pre-clinical and product development team are evaluating products that include combination gels and barrier methods, such as an intravaginal ring impregnated with tenofovir and a contraceptive that is the subject of this grant.

“Thanks to USAID, we have been able to manufacture the first product to reduce women's risk of HIV and herpes,” said Henry Gabelnick, Executive Director of CONRAD. “This award will allow us to expedite the evaluation of a dual-protection technology that promises to be a breakthrough in the simultaneous prevention of unplanned pregnancies and HIV infection.”

Almost half of all pregnancies worldwide, estimated to be over 100 million annually, are unintended. In sub-Saharan Africa in particular, low contraceptive use rates are reflected by high fertility rates, and thus high infant and maternal mortality rates. This area of the world is also the core of the AIDS epidemic, with 22.4 million people infected with HIV, many of them young women. Poverty, malnutrition, lack of education and gender inequality fuel both unintended pregnancies and HIV transmission; therefore, there is an urgent need to develop dual protection technologies.



“We strongly support research that focuses on women’s health in developing countries and a dual-protection product that can prevent unintended pregnancies as well as HIV and other STIs can make an enormous difference,” said Dr. Judy Manning with USAID. “CONRAD has been on the forefront of this technology and we are proud to support their work.”

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CONRAD is a cooperating agency of USAID committed to improving reproductive health by expanding the contraceptive choices of women and men and by helping to prevent the transmission of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. CONRAD is a Division of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Eastern Virginia Medical School (EVMS) in Norfolk, VA, where it has laboratories and a clinical research center. The main office is located in Arlington, VA with an additional office in West Chester, PA. For more information, go to www.conrad.org.