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USU's Infectious Disease Clinical Research Program Hosts First Science Symposium

Bethesda, Md. – Infectious diseases like COVID, HIV, and battlefield wound infections cause illness and disruptions that threaten health and military readiness across the nation. To help foster collaboration in the field and share best practices, the Uniformed Service University's (USU) Infectious Disease Clinical Research Program (IDCRP) is hosting its first annual Science Symposium March 6-10.

The event is being held in collaboration with the Defense Health Agency Infectious Disease Working Group Subcommittee. Army Brig. Gen. (Dr.) Clinton Murray, Commanding General, Medical Readiness Command, Europe/Command Surgeon, kicked off the event with a keynote address, speaking to the importance of infectious disease research in light of the ongoing operational landscape that demands anticipation of where and how the U.S. military and its allies need to be prepared to fight. Throughout the week, the event will include a variety of presentations, such as emerging infectious disease diagnostics, clinical applications of new technologies, and clinical characteristics of COVID-19 reinfection.

In his welcome remarks, USU President Dr. Jonathan Woodson told symposium attendees to think outside the box in seeking solutions to addressing infectious disease threats. "Forums like this one provide outstanding opportunities to share lessons-learned and best practices," he said. "I look to all of you at this meeting to help us solve the difficult infectious disease challenges, from multidrug resistance and biofilms in war wounds, to skin and soft tissue infections in our basic trainees, to preparing us to respond rapidly to the next pandemic, whether from a next generation version of Covid or Ebola or bioterrorism, or an emerging infectious disease threat we don't even know about yet. Lean forward! Push the envelope."

Now approaching its 18th year, the IDCRP has been successful in generating evidence to impact DoD policy and practice in the mitigation of infections affecting active duty servicemembers and MHS beneficiaries, said Dr. David Tribble, IDCRP's science director and symposium organizer.

"This success is due to our partnerships with the military infectious disease clinical and research community, the NIAID/NIH, and other non-DoD partners," Tribble said. "The IDCRP Science Symposium provides a forum to discuss the breadth of this effort, consider critical gaps, and develop future research."

"IDCRP conducts clinical research to mitigate the impact of infectious diseases on military populations," added Dr. Robert O'Connell, IDCRP director. "This event will help us form and strengthen essential collaborative partnerships and focus our research strategy."

IDCRP is the top resource for the DoD to readily identify and assess infectious disease risks, providing clinical research to help shape best practices and policies. The Center is also the DoD's global multi-center, collaborative clinical research network dedicated to reducing the impact of infectious disease threats in the Military Health System, improving care of the warfighter, and ensuring the military community is ready to respond whenever and wherever the next infectious disease outbreak occurs.

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About the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences: The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, founded by an act of Congress in 1972, is the nation's federal health sciences university and the academic heart of the Military Health System. USU students are primarily active-duty uniformed officers in the Army, Navy, Air Force and Public Health Service who receive specialized education in tropical and infectious diseases, TBI and PTSD, disaster response and humanitarian assistance, global health, and acute trauma care. USU also has graduate programs in oral biology, biomedical sciences and public health committed to excellence in research. The University's research program covers a wide range of areas important to both the military and public health. For more information about USU and its programs, visit www.usuhs.edu.