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CDC Approves Partial Resumption of USAMRIID Research

The U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases (USAMRIID) will resume limited research, following a successful recent inspection by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention.

In July 2019, the CDC suspended USAMRIID's registration to work with Biological Select Agents and Toxins, citing issues with its biosafety program. There was no risk to employee health, public health, or the environment, and no infectious agents were detected outside of containment areas.

In the past four months, USAMRIID has engaged in ongoing discussions with the CDC while taking a comprehensive approach to improving infrastructure, training, compliance, and biosafety standards. In early November, the CDC's Division of Select Agents and Toxins (DSAT) conducted a site inspection of USAMRIID to assess its progress.

The CDC provided additional conditions for research to gradually resume, which include allowing a limited number of studies to be performed. Work on these studies will be conducted in specified laboratories only, by select personnel who have undergone extensive training. These limited activities will afford USAMRIID and DSAT the opportunity to evaluate the newly implemented processes and procedures.

The CDC will continue to conduct on-site evaluations to observe laboratory personnel. Real-time observations will be conducted at all supervisory levels in order to ensure that practices are in compliance with the revised biosafety plan and that any deviation is corrected on the spot.

The overall effort to restore USAMRIID to full operational capability utilizes a "crawl, walk, run" approach to getting back into containment laboratory operations, according to Colonel E. Darrin Cox, the Institute's commander. "Our concept is to start with a small group of people, secure approval for a limited number of studies, and then gradually expand to include more research projects across additional laboratory suites," Cox said. "Resuming operations in this

stepwise fashion also allows for continuous communication with the CDC and our Army leadership.”

Leaders from the U.S. Army Futures Command and the U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command, USAMRIID’s higher headquarters, have been engaged in the effort to bring USAMRIID back online, according to Brigadier General Michael J. Talley, Commanding General, USAMRDC and Fort Detrick. “We are committed, first and foremost, to the safety of our workforce and the surrounding community,” said Talley. “We are also committed to restoring USAMRIID to full mission capability so we can continue doing the critical research that protects our Warfighters and citizens, in this country and around the world.”

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About the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases:

USAMRIID is celebrating its 50th year of providing leading edge medical capabilities to deter and defend against current and emerging biological threat agents. The Institute is the only laboratory in the Department of Defense equipped to safely study highly hazardous viruses requiring maximum containment at Biosafety Level 4. Research conducted at USAMRIID leads to medical solutions—vaccines, drugs, diagnostics, and training programs—that benefit both military personnel and civilians. Established in 1969, the Institute plays a key role as the lead military medical research laboratory for the Defense Threat Reduction Agency’s Joint Science and Technology Office for Chemical and Biological Defense. USAMRIID is a subordinate laboratory of the U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command. For more information, visit www.usamriid.army.mil.