

## The ICAV News

August/September 2007

Dear Reader,

It is my pleasure to introduce the first issue of *The ICAV News*. As the pace of progress has picked up measurably at ICAV over the past year, we have decided to circulate a short newsletter to keep ICAV-affiliated scientists and experts informed about ongoing developments. *The ICAV News* will be a short, bi-monthly publication that summarizes recent developments of importance to ICAV and those involved with the organization. As such, please do not hesitate to circulate this email freely amongst your colleagues.

I sincerely hope that you find *The ICAV News* both useful and informative. As we are just starting, any comments on how we can improve the format or content would be greatly appreciated.

I would like to thank you all in advance for your consideration.

Yours very truly,

Nathaniel Lewis  
Acting Director of Communications, ICAV

### A Message from the CEO, Jeremy Carver

Dear Colleagues,

It has been a prodigious past few months for the ICAV organization. The two symposia that ICAV organized in 2007—on the Gold Coast in Australia and in Abuja, Nigeria—engendered excellent results. New viral targets were identified, networking opportunities were cultivated and important links were formed in each region. I am particularly excited about the establishment of the ICAV Africa Regional Office, which will take place over the next six months. Building on the successes of the Abuja conference, this office will firmly establish an ICAV presence in Africa and open ICAV's scientific network to researchers from the continent. Looking to the future, ICAV is planning two symposia in 2008: in Ontario, Canada and in Beijing, China.

Over the last year, ICAV's disease targets have evolved because of changing realities in the field as well as input from ICAV symposia. We have defined eight diseases that will guide ICAV's focus over the next few years: influenza, HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B and hepatitis C, Dengue fever, rotavirus infection, Yellow fever, and Lassa fever. ICAV's ultimate goal remains, however, broad-spectrum solutions to viral diseases. As such, this list is not inclusive of ICAV's prospective outputs, but serves rather as a general guideline.

The \$2 million grant from the Public Health Agency of Canada—to evaluate, prioritize and begin development of the best anti-influenza compounds in ICAV's pipeline—has allowed us to start concrete work on drug development. ICAV has populated the Technical Review Committee and established a management structure at our Head Office located at Trent University. These two elements, along with the International Scientific Advisory Board, constitute the nuts and bolts of the drug development process and represent a formidable resource in the realization of novel anti-viral therapies available to all who need them.



In an effort to better communicate with the scientists and experts affiliated with ICAV, the ICAV Head Office have decided to circulate a short email every two months summarizing ICAV-related developments: *The ICAV News*. Our intention is not to clutter your respective inboxes, but to inform you, the scientists, researchers, and experts affiliated with ICAV, of important developments pertaining to our organization. This newsletter is a prelude to a more functional communications strategy that we are in the process of implementing. In the coming months ICAV will be launching a communications platform that will facilitate the networking that underlies the ICAV philosophy. In essence, it will be a virtual space that will allow collaborators to work together, sharing knowledge and information and facilitating partnerships. I sincerely hope this communications platform will serve to better incorporate our diverse scientific network and serve to stimulate increased involvement in ICAV as it grows.

In the meantime, I hope this short email newsletter proves helpful in keeping you informed of ICAV developments. You can also consult the ICAV website at [www.icav-citav.ca](http://www.icav-citav.ca) at your leisure.

Let me conclude by thanking all of you for your efforts on ICAV's behalf. Without the continued support of the scientists that constitute ICAV's backbone, none of what we are doing would be possible.

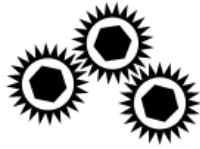
Sincerely,

Dr. Jeremy Carver  
CEO/CSO, ICAV

#### **ICAV Receives \$2 million from the Public Health Agency of Canada**

On 23 March 2007 the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) announced a grant to ICAV for \$2 million over two years. ICAV is using this seed funding to evaluate, prioritize and begin development of the best anti-influenza drug candidates that have been identified through the ICAV series of international workshops. This grant has allowed ICAV to put into place a management team located at Trent University as well as establish the Technical Review Committee. The press release for this grant is available on our website by clicking [here](#).

As ICAV is now in a position to evaluate potential compounds, if you have a promising candidate with demonstrated efficacy against influenza please contact Dr. Jeremy Carver at [jeremy.carver@icav-citav.ca](mailto:jeremy.carver@icav-citav.ca).



### **The ICAV Technical Review Committee**

The PHAC grant has enabled ICAV to form the Technical Review Committee, which is responsible for the pre-clinical and clinical development of ICAV's pipeline. Currently, the committee is working on evaluating and prioritizing the anti-influenza candidates in the ICAV pipeline. Contingent upon further funding, the Technical Review Committee will be available to evaluate and prioritize drug candidates for other ICAV disease targets. Coordinated by the ICAV management team, the Technical Review Committee will be a primary vehicle in the clinical development and commercialization of ICAV's drug candidates.

The Technical Review Committee covers all areas of drug development and brings to the table many years of industry experience and expertise. The members of this committee are:

- Wendy Hill, Gap Strategies, clinical development expertise
- Miklos Schulz, SciAn Services Inc., clinical design and biostatistics expertise
- Isobel Ralston, Toreal Research Inc., preclinical development expertise
- Anne Tomalin, CanReg Inc., regulatory expertise
- Theo Anucha, ValuGen Pharmaceuticals Inc., manufacturing and analytical expertise
- Linda Kurdydyk, intellectual property expertise
- Saul I. Ship, Biomedical Marketing Consulting, marketing expertise

### **The First African Symposium on Avian Influenza and Anti-Virals**

The most recent ICAV symposium, the First African Symposium on Avian Influenza and Anti-Virals took place on 7-8 May 2007 in Abuja, Nigeria, and was accompanied by a parallel bioinformatics workshop attended by 20 trainees from the region. In a promising first step for ICAV onto the African continent, the Symposium assembled over 200 African and international scientists, experts and public health officials to discuss the ramifications of the recent outbreaks of avian flu in Africa, including the first human case of the H5N1 influenza virus in sub-Saharan Africa, confirmed on 6 February, 2007, as well as anti-virals strategies for confronting the pandemic threat.

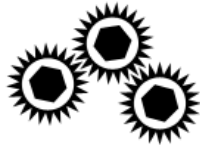
One of the primary accomplishments of the Symposium was to bring together scientists and physicians from both the agricultural and health disciplines. Experts from these often isolated fields were able to effectively communicate both amongst each other and with the political authorities who were present at the meeting.

The ICAV scientific agenda was also advanced. Lassa fever was added to the priority list of ICAV targets following presentations by Nigerian and European scientists on possible therapeutic strategies to confront this deadly disease, named after the Nigerian village where it was first discovered. A collaboration between the University of Lagos and the University of Lübeck was established.

To build on the accomplishments of the symposium, an ICAV African Regional Office will be established in the coming months in Abuja, Nigeria. The office will coordinate ICAV activities in Africa by facilitating partnerships with African scientists, organizing an annual conference and training session, and hosting a bioinformatics lab.

More information on the Nigerian Symposium is available by clicking [here](#).

ICAV  
International Consortium  
on Anti-Virals



CITAV  
Consortium International  
sur les Thérapies Antivirales

### Upcoming Events

ICAV is in the process of organizing a symposium in May of 2008 that will take place jointly in Toronto and at Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario.

An ICAV symposium will take place in late 2008 in Beijing, China, organized in conjunction with the Chinese Academy of Science.

\* \* \* \*

Please direct any questions or comments regarding this newsletter to [nathaniel.lewis@icav-citav.ca](mailto:nathaniel.lewis@icav-citav.ca).

To subscribe to this publication please send an email with the text SUBSCRIBE in the subject line to [christine.hodge@icav-citav.ca](mailto:christine.hodge@icav-citav.ca). Conversely, if you do not wish to receive further instalments of this newsletter, please send an email with the text UNSUBSCRIBE in the subject line to [christine.hodge@icav-citav.ca](mailto:christine.hodge@icav-citav.ca).