

MARYLAND BIOTECH CENTER JOINS HOPKINS, UNIVERSITY OF MD IN AWARDING 2011 *BIOMARYLAND LIFE* PRIZES

\$50,000 grant helps further research, bring new discoveries to commercial market

BALTIMORE, MD (October 26, 2011) – Maryland Biotechnology Center Executive Director Dr. Judy Britz joined Johns Hopkins University and University of Maryland officials last night to award two 2011 *BioMaryland LIFE* (Leading Innovative Faculty Entrepreneurs) Prizes to University of Maryland Medical Center's Dr. James Gammie and to Johns Hopkins School of Medicine's Dr. Sara Sukumar. The *LIFE* Prize is a \$50,000 grant funded by the Maryland Biotech Center along with the two universities to help advance research in biotech and biopharma, medical devices, or diagnostics that has the greatest potential for commercial application. As part of the day-long Joint Meeting of the Johns Hopkins Alliance for Science and Technology Development and the University of Maryland, Baltimore Commercial Advisory Board, attended by more than more than 150 venture capitalists, seasoned biotech entrepreneurs and business development executives from the biopharma industry, judging committees evaluated presentations from two dozen university researchers before selecting the two winners. Dr. Gammie was recognized for his work with devices for mitral valve repair and Dr. Sukumar received the grant to help further her research with gene markers for early detection, prognosis and prediction of breast cancer.

"In Maryland, we are fortunate to have within our borders some of the world's best and brightest scientific minds," said Governor Martin O'Malley. "We are pleased to partner with our world-class universities to create jobs and support efforts to promote innovation to assert our State as a hub of research and discovery."

"There is so much groundbreaking science taking place at these institutions," said Dr. Britz. "We salute our partners at Johns Hopkins and University of Maryland and all of the faculty innovators who presented for working hard to take their discoveries from the bench to the bedside. These translational research projects offer not only the promise of improved outcomes for patient health, but also can create job opportunities in Maryland's life sciences sector."

In 2010, the *BioMaryland LIFE* Prize was awarded to Johns Hopkins Medicine Professor Cynthia Salorio and University of Maryland School of Medicine Professor James Galen, both of whom acknowledged at yesterday's meeting how much the grant has helped advance their research.

Dr. Salorio designed a programmable, vibrating wristband to patients who have had a stroke or undergone a hemispherectomy to treat severe epilepsy. She used the grant to work with an engineering

firm to refine her prototype, get 20 new prototypes manufactured, and begin the testing process using the new prototype on both adults and children with hemiplegia.

Dr. Galen used the grant to further develop a vaccine against life-threatening Clostridium difficile-associated disease (CDAD). In the U.S. alone, more than \$3.8 billion is spent each year on the treatment of CDAD cases that have soared in number and increased in mortality in recent years. Galen said the grant enabled him to complete engineering the vaccine strain and is now able to test the vaccine in a disease-challenge model in mice, a critical step in the product's clinical development. His work during the last year has also led to an important discovery which is expected to have a broad impact on vaccine development such that people will be better protected from a number of disease-causing bacteria.

ABOUT THE MARYLAND BIOTECHNOLOGY CENTER:

The Maryland Biotechnology Center is an organization within the State's Department of Business and Economic Development that coordinates government, nonprofit and private sector initiatives to help entrepreneurs, academic and government scientists accelerate the conversion of biotechnology innovation into products that create jobs, develop businesses and benefit the state's economy. For more information, visit www.marylandbiocenter.org.

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