

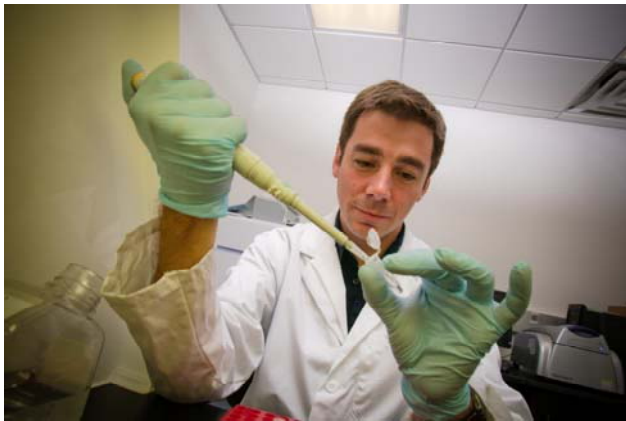


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LEADING HIV/AIDS RESEARCHER JOINS VGTI FLORIDA; RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS amFAR GRANT

PORT SAINT LUCIE, Fla. (March 31, 2011) – **Nicolas Chomont, Ph.D.**, has recently joined the team of world-renowned researchers at the Vaccine & Gene Therapy Institute (VGTI) of Florida as an assistant member and principal investigator. Dr. Chomont is an internationally recognized expert in



HIV and AIDS research. Earlier this month, he received a \$120,000 grant from amFAR, the Foundation for AIDS Research, which will fund a one-year study titled, “Exploring the mechanisms for HIV persistence and the potential for HIV eradication.” Even though patients can control their HIV infection with drug therapy, they must remain on these drugs for their entire life because the virus lies dormant hiding out in cells that act as a reservoir for the

virus. Once the drug regimen is stopped, the dormant virus can reawaken and infect other cells. This study will fund research that aims to determine how we can use novel approaches to purge the body of the HIV virus thereby helping contribute to the cure of patients of HIV.

“The addition of Dr. Chomont is important to the VGTI Florida team. His research findings are well known and very significant in the quest to find a way to stamp out one of the most complex viral diseases known to man,” said Jay Nelson, Ph.D., founder, executive director and vice president of VGTI Florida, and director of the Pacific Northwest Regional Center of Excellence in Biodefense and Emerging Diseases Research, one of 11 such centers across the country. “We are proud to be able to attract and recruit to VGTI Florida such a talented scientist.”

Dr. Chomont’s work has been recognized with a number of prestigious awards, including an American Foundation for AIDS Research post-doctoral fellowship. He also earned a post-doctoral

fellowship from the Louis Pasteur Foundation in Canada, and a fellowship from the National Agency for AIDS Research in France.

“I have worked with Dr. Chomont on tough clinical research problems in the past, and he has always applied his scientific creativity to find solutions,” said Dr. Rafick-Pierre Sékaly, co-director and Chief scientific officer of VGTI Florida. “He has made significant contributions in the area of HIV/AIDS research, and we plan on him continuing those studies at VGTI Florida.”

Dr. Chomont earned his bachelor’s degree in biological sciences, a master’s degree in biochemistry and his doctorate in virology at the University of Paris. Prior to arriving at VGTI Florida, he completed his post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Montreal.

About VGTI Florida

VGTI Florida is a world-class research institute in Port St. Lucie, Fla. that focuses on studying the human immune system to prevent and treat chronic infectious diseases, cancer and ailments that disproportionately affect aging populations. The Institute’s researchers have contributed to significant advances in the development of vaccines and other therapeutics to fight diseases such as AIDS, melanoma, breast cancer, prostate cancer, yellow fever and dengue fever. VGTI Florida is an independent 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization that is related to the Vaccine and Gene Therapy Institute at Oregon Health & Science University in Beaverton, Ore. For more information, please visit www.vgti-fl.org.

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