



Cancer Prevention & Research Institute of Texas

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Nobel Laureate Phillip A. Sharp, Ph.D., to head CPRIT Scientific Review Council

AUSTIN, TX –Monday, June 15, 2009 - The Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT) announced today that Phillip A. Sharp, Ph.D., will chair the Institute's Scientific Review Council overseeing the selection of the agency's research grants. Dr. Sharp, a world leader of research in molecular biology and biochemistry, is a professor at the David H. Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

In November 2007, Texas voters approved a constitutional amendment allowing the State of Texas to establish CPRIT and to issue \$3 billion in general obligation bonds over ten years to fund grants for cancer research and prevention. Research and prevention grant applications will be assessed using an external-to-Texas peer review process. CPRIT plans to announce its first round of Request for Proposals in August and grants could be awarded by the end of the calendar year. Alfred G. Gilman, M.D., Ph.D., another renowned scientist and Nobel Laureate, will lead the research grant process as Chief Scientific Officer of the Institute.

"I'm thrilled to be part of the CPRIT team," said Dr. Sharp. "It will be very exciting to see CPRIT fund innovative research that will continue the quest in the cure for cancer".

William "Bill" Gimson, former Chief Operating Officer of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, was appointed Executive Director of the Institute in March 2009. Dr. Gilman, former executive vice president for academic affairs, Provost and Dean at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, assumed his duties last week. Other key positions of the CPRIT leadership team are being formalized along with policies and processes that will ensure CPRIT funds only the best scientific research and prevention projects, measures its success and shares results on progress so that Texas will lead the nation as a model for cancer research and prevention programs.

"Phil Sharp is a spectacular addition to the CPRIT team. He is a superior scientist with broad experience in many areas relevant to cancer," said Dr. Gilman. "He is also a translator of basic research into valuable, practical outcomes, having been instrumental in the founding of highly successful biotechnology companies. Phil and I have worked together before, and I very much look forward to renewing our partnership to ensure the success of CPRIT."

Dr. Sharp earned a B.A. degree from Union College, KY in 1966, and a Ph.D. in chemistry from the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana in 1969. He did his postdoctoral training at the California Institute of Technology. In 1974, he joined MIT's Center for Cancer Research (now the David H. Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research). He received the 1993 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for his discovery of split genes. In 1978, Dr. Sharp co-founded Biogen (now Biogen Idec), and in 2002 he co-founded Alnylam Pharmaceuticals, an early-stage therapeutics company. He has received several awards, including the National Medal of Science for Biological Sciences, and he is an elected member of the National Academy of Sciences, the Institute of Medicine, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the American Philosophical Society.

"The trust of Texas voters, the faith of the legislature, the dedication of CPRIT's Oversight Committee, and the firm commitment of world renowned scientists such as Dr. Gilman and Dr. Sharp clearly illustrate CPRIT is going to be an international leader in cancer research and prevention," said Gimson.