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Lasker Foundation Partners with NIH Clinical Research Scholars Program *New Initiative Links Cutting-Edge Research with Improved Patient Care*

NEW YORK, December 9, 2010 – To mark the 65th anniversary of its prestigious awards program, the **Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation** today announced the formation of the Lasker Clinical Research Scholars Program, an innovative partnership with the National Institutes of Health. The NIH-funded initiative provides up to 11 years of support for medical doctors to bridge the widening gap between cutting-edge research and improved patient care.

“The Lasker Clinical Research Scholars program addresses one of the greatest challenges in medicine – how to quickly translate basic findings into successful treatments and cures,” said Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation President, Dr. Maria Freire. “By supporting this important translational research initiative, the Foundation will foster the next generation of physician-scientists, and expand the number of people who benefit from the latest breakthroughs in medical research.”

“The Lasker Clinical Research Scholars Program will be a terrific contributor to the future of clinical research. It will help increase the number of physician-researchers at the NIH and at academic institutions by giving talented doctors the financial support they need to forward their careers,” said NIH Director Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D.

Under the program, NIH Institutes will specify clinical research topics that merit support and accept applications each year from early-career investigators in those areas. Applications will be reviewed for scientific merit by a peer review group of scientists, convened by the NIH Center for Scientific Review, and make recommendations to the NIH scientific and clinical directors who will annually select outstanding scholars for placement on the NIH tenure-track. The NIH expects to appoint at least three Lasker Scholars in the first year of the program, and to ultimately reach a steady-state of 20-30 active awardees.

The Foundation also will help identify appropriate mentors for the incoming scholars, who will conduct their clinical research at the NIH in Bethesda, Maryland; fund travel costs for NIH lecturers and the attendance by the scholars at the Lasker Award ceremony; and support annual meetings for presentations and discussions on topics related to the program.

At the NIH, Boards of Scientific Counselors will regularly evaluate these researchers' programs. After five-to-seven years, each candidate will be reviewed again by a group of distinguished clinical investigators; and by mutual agreement between the NIH and the candidates, a decision will be made as to whether they will stay on as tenured senior investigators at the NIH or they will be eligible for outside research grant support worth \$500,000 a year plus overhead for four years.

“It’s our expectation that the Lasker scholars will continue to make the NIH Clinical Center an important national resource that enables the widest number of people possible to benefit from our

nation's investment in medical research," said NIH Deputy Director of Intramural Research Michael Gottesman, M.D.

About the Lasker Foundation:

The **Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation** fosters the prevention and treatment of disease and disabilities by honoring excellence in basic and clinical science, by educating the public, and by advocating for support of medical research.

Founded in 1942, the Lasker Foundation presents the prestigious **Lasker Awards**, which recognize the world's leaders in basic and clinical medical research, and individuals with outstanding public service. For much of the 20th Century, the Lasker Foundation was led by Mary Lasker, who was America's most prominent citizen-activist for public investment in medical research. Mary Lasker is widely credited with persuading the White House and the Congress to greatly expand federal funding for medical research, particularly through the National Institutes of Health.

Further information about the Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation is available at www.laskerfoundation.org.

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