

Tulane National Primate Research Center to Participate in Development of Treatment for Smallpox

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Tulane National Primate Research Center (TNPRC) is one of three institutions nationwide that will help develop an inhaled version of the injectable antiviral drug, cidofovir, for treatment of smallpox, a disease that was eradicated worldwide in the 1970s but has re-emerged as a possible weapon of bioterrorists. The development effort will be funded through a five-year, \$30.9 million contract from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Smallpox occurs through inhalation of airborne variola virus, usually in droplets originating from the mouth, nose or throat of an infected person. Inhaled cidofovir has been shown in multiple studies to be highly effective against various pox models, producing long-term activity and retention in the lung tissue compared to injectable administration, which results in lower retention in lung tissue, possible kidney damage and requires a health-care worker to implement treatment.

Biopharmaceutical company Nanotherapeutics will coordinate a consortium of experts and organizations to support the preclinical development program including Tulane National Primate Research Center, Respirics, Next Breath, and Lovelace Respiratory Research Institute.

The Tulane National Primate Research Center is a unit of Tulane University's Health Sciences Center located in the greater New Orleans area. The TNPRC, among the largest of the eight NIH-funded primate research centers in the nation, has been heavily engaged in infectious disease research for over three decades. Tulane's is the only National Primate Research Center with an NIH-funded high containment Regional Biosafety Laboratory focused on research with emerging infectious disease and biodefense agents. For more information, visit www.tpc.tulane.edu.