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Attn: Health, HIV and Women's Issues Editors and Reporters

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### **New Generation of Women's Health Tools on Horizon: Simultaneous Prevention of HIV, other STIs and Unplanned Pregnancy with MPTs**

**Brisbane, Australia:** Around the world, millions of women and adolescent girls face potentially dire consequences from unplanned pregnancy, HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs)— all significant health risks of unprotected sex. Recent developments in the emerging field of Multipurpose Prevention Technologies (MPTs) are poised to deliver a new generation of safe and effective prevention methods that better meet women's needs. At an upcoming conference, leading researchers will announce new discoveries and recent developments in the field of MPTs that will soon enable women to simultaneously prevent unplanned pregnancy, HIV and other STIs.

There are close to a dozen MPT products for women now in clinical trials, and still more innovative designs entering the product development pipeline. MPT researchers will highlight these promising developments in a panel, September 16<sup>th</sup>, at the World STI & HIV 2015 Congress in Brisbane, Australia (September 13-16). Researchers will address:

- The array of products in development with a focus on HIV/STI impact
- The role of MPTs in the prevention of infertility
- The need for rectal MPTs to reduce HIV and other STIs, and their potential impact for women and men who have sex with men (MSM)

“The growing field of MPTs is in an exciting phase of scientific advancement,” said Dr. Craig Cohen, professor of obstetrics, gynecology and reproductive sciences at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), Bixby Center for Global Reproductive Health. “We are on the cusp of breakthroughs that will transform the health of women and families globally. Delivering HIV and STI prevention in combination with contraception has great potential to impact women's health around the world. It is a promising moment for research and investment in this important field in order to make more effective prevention a reality.”

Researchers note that despite the important advances in HIV prevention with pre-exposure prophylaxis (PreP), HIV rates remain high in many under-resourced areas of the world where HIV is the leading cause of death among women of reproductive age. STIs other than HIV, like chlamydia or human papilloma virus (HPV), are responsible for a significant percentage of female infertility and cancers globally, and also put women at greater risk of HIV. Preventing unplanned pregnancies can reduce maternal mortality and morbidity, as well as cut child mortality.

MPTs are being developed for a variety of indications to meet women's diverse needs. For example, some products can prevent HIV and HPV, while still allowing women to become pregnant. Other products will prevent rectal transmission of HIV and STIs, a risk affecting both men and women.

“Delivering HIV prevention in combination with contraception has great potential to impact the lives of women worldwide,” Says Dr. Helen Rees, Executive Director of the Reproductive Health and HIV Institute at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. “The ISSTD World STI & HIV 2015 Congress offers us the opportunity to accelerate the momentum behind the development of MPTs and to consider new options that combine STI prevention with contraception and/or HIV prevention. Against the backdrop of the Sustainable Development Goals, the need for improved, affordable and more ‘fit for purpose’ reproductive health technologies has been highlighted, and ISSTD gives the field an opportunity to explore new possibilities across the disciplines.”

“The advances in the MPT field over the past six years have been significant,” says Dr. Bethany Young Holt, Director of the Initiative for MPTs (IMPT) the global collaboration of scientists, public policy experts and women's health advocates that have been creating the platform for MPT research and commercialization, “The game-changer is that the field is collaborating to include women's concerns and feedback early during product development. When we listen to women we are better able to shape the product development process so that when MPTs reach women's hands, they will want to use them.”

The MPT symposium is being organized by the World Health Organization (WHO), University of California San Francisco (UCSF) Bixby Center for Global Reproductive Health, Initiative for Multipurpose Prevention Technologies (IMPT) and the Australian Sexual Health Alliance (ASHA).

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The **Initiative for MPTs (IMPT)** is an international collaboration of researchers, health care providers, policymakers, epidemiologists, product developers, advocates and supporting agencies committed to safely and swiftly bringing new MPTs to market. By working together and integrating the perspectives and feedback from women around the world, we share vital findings, address field wide gaps and advance the most promising MPTs to save lives. The IMPT is a project of CAMI Health, an organization dedicated to women's reproductive health and empowerment, housed at the Public Health Institute (PHI). For more information about the IMPT and MPTs in development, visit [Cami-Health.org](http://Cami-Health.org).

The **UCSF Bixby Center** works to ensure that women, men and adolescents have the power to manage their health, including access to safe and effective birth control, abortion, childbirth, and prevention and care for sexually transmitted infections. Our rigorous research generates evidence that we translate into better health policies and clinical care. For more information about the UCSF Bixby Center, visit [bixbycenter.ucsf.edu](http://bixbycenter.ucsf.edu).

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