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NEWS RELEASE

Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine Receives NIH Grant to Study Transmission of Mosquito-Borne Diseases

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BASSETERRE, St. Kitts--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- In recent years, mosquito-transmitted arboviruses such as chikungunya, dengue and Zika, have emerged as global public health threats. Scientists are still unsure as to how these viruses spread from their natural hosts, non-human primates in Africa and Asia, to people - resulting in epidemics around the world. Researchers at Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine (Ross) have been awarded a grant by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to study these viruses and advance our understanding of how they may be transmitted between animals and humans.

The research will investigate whether African Green Monkeys are infected with arboviruses in the five ecosystems present on the island of St. Kitts, identify the mosquitoes that may be involved in the transmission of the viruses among the monkeys, and probe how the virus is spread amongst people on the island.

“Without readily available vaccines and specific treatment for many arboviruses, it is critical to understand their transmission cycles in order to control the spread of the diseases they cause,” said Patrick Kelly, BVSC, Ph.D., Ross professor of small animal medicine, who is the principal investigator for this project. “This better understanding of the roles non-human primates play in the epidemiology of arboviral diseases will lead to improved surveillance and control strategies for the diseases.”

Kelly said the findings of this study could potentially help scientists who are studying the transmission dynamics of the viruses in other regions of the world, including Africa, South America and Asia.

“Our university’s location in the tropics provides an ideal backdrop for conducting surveillance and research programs of strategic importance to the developing world,” said Sean Callanan, dean at Ross. “This project leverages our skilled scientists and advanced research facilities to tackle one of the most pressing health issues of the 21st century.”

Led by Ross, the research is a collaborative effort with investigators at Kansas State University and the

University of Georgia. The grant was awarded by NIH's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (grant number 1R21AI128407-01). It is the first NIH grant awarded to a research team at Ross.

About Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine

Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine (Ross), founded in 1982, is committed to preparing students to become members and leaders of the worldwide public and professional healthcare team and to advance human, animal and ecosystem health through research and knowledge exchange. Ross has focused research programs with an emphasis on emerging infectious and zoonotic diseases, conservation medicine, and ecosystem health. Ross offers postgraduate Masters', Ph.D. and Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) programs accredited by the St. Christopher & Nevis Accreditation Board. The DVM program also holds accredited status from the American Veterinary Medical Association (www.avma.org). Ross is a part of DeVry Education Group (NYSE:DV). For more information about Ross, visit www.rossu.edu/vet.

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