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JOHNS HOPKINS APPOINTS NEW CHAIR OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES - HEPATITIS EXPERT AT HOPKINS SINCE 1990

Physician-scientist David L. Thomas, M.D., a world-renowned expert on hepatitis C and a faculty member at The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine since 1993, will be the new head of the School's Division of Infectious Diseases beginning July 1. He succeeds John Bartlett, M.D., who led the department for 26 years and will remain active on infectious diseases' faculty.

Thomas, 45, has focused most of his research efforts over the past two decades on liver infections, especially the causes and treatments for hepatitis C, the leading cause of liver disease in the United States and an infection that kills an estimated 10,000 to 12,000 Americans each year.

The author of more than 100 articles and many book chapters on various aspects of hepatitis, Thomas also has investigated how co-infections with hepatic C viruses and HIV progress in intravenous drug users with weakened immune systems. Hepatitis C is transmitted via infected blood and possibly other body fluids. Injection drug use is the leading cause.

"This is a great appointment for Hopkins and for Dr. Thomas, who has honed his medical and research expertise here," says Myron Weisfeldt, M.D., physician in chief at The Johns Hopkins Hospital and a professor and director of the Department of Medicine at the School. "Dave Thomas understands how the Hopkins experience helped him to develop as a global leader in the field, and he is perfectly positioned to build upon these insights to inspire the next generation of researchers."

In his new role, Thomas will lead the division's 55 faculty and 177 staff who treat more than 5,100 patients a year and run the nation's third largest AIDS clinic. He will also oversee an annual research budget of more than \$40 million, one of the largest at Hopkins, with major research initiatives under way in HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, avian flu and methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, in addition to hepatitis C.

Indeed, Weisfeldt says, it was Bartlett who grew the division to its current position of strength, having started out in 1980 with three full-time staff and a budget of just \$200,000. He points out that during Bartlett's tenure, U.S. News & World Report consistently ranked Hopkins number two in AIDS care among American academic medical centers, behind the University of California, San Francisco.

Bartlett adds, "The division could not be in better hands. Dave Thomas is a superb scientist and humanist. I expect that the division will reach new heights under his leadership."

Thomas begins his new job after a year living in Uganda, where he and other infectious disease experts from across North America have been helping Ugandan health professionals set up an institute for combating the effects of AIDS and other infectious diseases. The institute provides free medical and social services for HIV-1 infected Ugandans and training for physicians and nurses from across sub-Saharan Africa.

Thomas earned both his undergraduate degree in chemistry, in 1982, and his medical degree, in 1986, from West Virginia University. He then completed his medical training and residency at Wake Forest University in N.C., before coming to Hopkins' School of Medicine as a research fellow in infectious diseases. He went on to earn his master's in public health at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and joined the faculty at both schools, Medicine in 1993 and Public Health in 1994. For his commitment to translating medical research into advances in the care of people living with both hepatitis C and HIV, the American Society of Clinical Investigation named him in 2001 to its honor list of physician-scientists.