

PHILADELPHIA, PA, October 09, 2013 **/24-7PressRelease/** -- At a ceremony held at the Pennsylvania Biotechnology Center on Oct. 7, the Hepatitis B Foundation's research institute officially was renamed the Baruch S. Blumberg Institute. The new name honors the scientific legacy of the Foundation's co-founder, the late Dr. Baruch Blumberg who, in 1976, won the Nobel Prize in medicine for his discovery of the hepatitis B virus. Along with his colleagues, Dr. Blumberg discovered the virus in 1967, developed the blood test used to detect the virus, and invented the first hepatitis B vaccine in 1969.

Leaders from the community spoke during the ceremony and Mark Thompson, President and CEO of The New York Times Company, and son-in-law to Dr. Blumberg, presented the keynote speech. Dr. Blumberg's widow, Jean, took part in the ribbon-cutting, along with many other members of the family.

Dr. Timothy Block, President of the Hepatitis B Foundation and Pennsylvania Biotechnology Center noted, "Dr. Blumberg believed that the elimination of hepatitis B was entirely possible in our lifetime, and so do I. To honor him, the Hepatitis B Foundation is proud to rename its research center the Baruch S. Blumberg Institute. This new name will continue to inspire our researchers to pursue the search for a cure."

The Baruch S. Blumberg Institute gathers the largest concentration of nonprofit scientists working on the problem of hepatitis B and liver cancer in the U.S. and is at the forefront of drug discovery and early detection biomarkers for these two deadly diseases. Its mission is to continue the work of Dr. Blumberg who was committed to finding a cure and eliminating hepatitis B.

Hepatitis B is the most common serious liver infection and the primary cause of liver cancer worldwide. Two billion people have been infected with the hepatitis B virus (one out of three) and 400 million are chronically infected. Each year, 1 million people die prematurely from hepatitis B-related liver disease and liver cancer. In the United States, an estimated 2 million Americans - one in 20, are chronically infected with hepatitis B.

About the Baruch S. Blumberg Institute: The Baruch S. Blumberg Institute, formerly the Institute for Hepatitis and Virus Research, is an independent nonprofit research institute established in 2003 by the Hepatitis B Foundation to conduct discovery research and nurture translational biotechnology in an environment conducive to interaction, collaboration and focus. To learn more, go to <http://www.BlumbergInstitute.org>.