Biogen, Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, Partners HealthCare Launch Consortium to Build and Share a COVID-19 Biobank

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Biogen employees, family members, and other close contacts can contribute blood samples and medical data to aid efforts to rapidly understand and overcome COVID-19

- *Biobank to provide scientists with access to a large collection of biological and medical data to advance knowledge and search for potential vaccines and treatments*
- *The consortium includes Brigham and Women's Hospital and Massachusetts General Hospital, and will be overseen by a steering committee representing the different institutions*

CAMBRIDGE, Mass., April 16, 2020 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Biogen Inc. (Nasdaq: BIIB), Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, and Partners HealthCare today announced a consortium that will build and share a COVID-19 biobank. The biobank will help scientists study a large collection of de-identified biological and medical data to advance knowledge and search for potential vaccines and treatments. Biogen will help employees who wish to volunteer connect with the project. The volunteers are among the first people in Massachusetts to be diagnosed with and recover from COVID-19, as well as close contacts of those individuals, including people who were not tested or who may not have had symptoms.

According to researchers, this unique, clustered group of patients with a common exposure will offer a valuable lens into why some people show signs of disease and others are asymptomatic. It may also shed light on why among those with symptoms, some have more severe symptoms than others. Researchers will also examine blood samples from recovered patients to evaluate the levels of neutralizing antibodies against SARS-CoV-2 and other aspects of their immune profile, which may point the way toward short- and long-term therapeutic options.

Biogen employees who contracted and have recovered from COVID-19, as well as people identified as close contacts of those individuals -- regardless of whether they were confirmed as having COVID-19 -- are eligible to participate. Partners HealthCare, Massachusetts General Hospital and Brigham and Women's Hospital are coordinating the outreach and sample collection effort.

Data from blood samples will be generated at the Broad Institute, and de-identified. The biobank will then provide a unique, anonymous medical and biological data set that has the potential to shed light on the biology of the virus and illuminate pathways for potential vaccines, treatments, and other breakthroughs. The biobank will also store frozen samples, which may inform future research with appropriate patient consent. Biogen will have the same level of access to the biobank as researchers around the world, which means it will not have access to identifiable information, nor will the company know which employees and close contacts volunteered to participate.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has had a very direct, very personal impact on our Biogen community," said Maha Radhakrishnan, M.D., Chief Medical Officer at Biogen. "We are uniquely positioned to contribute to advancing COVID-19 science in an organized and deliberate way so we can all gain a better understanding of this virus. Many Biogen colleagues have been eager to find ways to help others during this pandemic, and it is our hope that this biobank will provide hope and essential information during this difficult time. It is an opportunity to activate and bring together our commitment to science with the needs of humanity, and we are proud to participate."

"Patients who have volunteered to donate data to accelerate the shared understanding of the disease play a crucial role in the global effort to overcome COVID-19. Through a shared biobank, researchers will be able to identify new patterns and drastically expand our knowledge of a disease," said Eric S. Lander, President and Founding Director of the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard. "We are enormously grateful to the Biogen employees, their family members, and other close contacts who have volunteered to take part in this essential effort."

The collaboration began when several Biogen employees, still recovering from COVID-19, began to consider ways they could contribute their own medical information to research efforts underway at Biogen and beyond. Biogen leaders reached out to several partners in the hospital and biomedical community, including Deborah Hung, a core faculty member of the Broad Institute where she serves as the co-director of the Infectious Disease and Microbiome Program, and a professor in the Departments of Genetics and Medicine at Harvard Medical School in the Divisions of Infectious Disease and Pulmonary and Critical Care and Department of Molecular Biology at Massachusetts General Hospital.

"The ability to collaborate directly with a cohort of local patients who were among the first in Massachusetts to contract COVID-19, and partner with leading health care and biomedical and research institutions across Kendall Square and the Boston area, allows us to launch many critical research approaches at once," Hung said. "Thanks to these patients and their close contacts, we'll gain insights into the biology of how the disease moved through a relatively small group of the larger population, early in the local life-cycle in Massachusetts. Just as important, we'll be able to evaluate the levels of neutralizing antibodies against SARS-CoV-2, and this may offer some options for therapies in the near term. We're grateful to these individuals for their willingness to participate, and hope that by sharing their data, researchers everywhere will be able to make new discoveries that point the way toward effective treatments."

"Our investigators at Massachusetts General Hospital and Brigham and Women's Hospital have been working around-the-clock on several promising clinical trials that we hope will lead to effective treatments for COVID-19. But patient participation in research is critical and the establishment of this biobank is a significant advancement for the research community and the broader patient population," said Ravi Thadhani, MD, MPH, Chief Academic Officer at Partners HealthCare. "Through this collaboration with Biogen and their employees who have volunteered to share their information, we will be able to learn significantly more about the characteristics and development of this disease and make important discoveries that will lead to treatments for the patients we care for and those around the world."

About Biogen
At Biogen, our mission is clear: we are pioneers in neuroscience. Biogen discovers, develops, and delivers worldwide innovative therapies for people living with serious neurological and neurodegenerative diseases as well as related therapeutic adjacencies. One of the world's first global biotechnology companies, Biogen was founded in 1978 by Charles Weissmann, Heinz Schaller, Kenneth Murray, and Nobel Prize winners Walter Gilbert and Phillip Sharp. Today Biogen has the leading portfolio of medicines to treat multiple sclerosis, has introduced the first approved treatment for spinal muscular atrophy, commercializes biosimilars of advanced biologics, and is focused on advancing research programs in multiple sclerosis and neuroimmunology, Alzheimer's disease and dementia, neuromuscular disorders, movement disorders, ophthalmology, immunology, neurocognitive disorders, acute

neurology, and pain.

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About the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard
Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard was launched in 2004 to empower this generation of creative scientists to transform medicine. The Broad Institute seeks to describe all the molecular components of life and their connections; discover the molecular basis of major human diseases; develop effective new approaches to diagnostics and therapeutics; and disseminate discoveries, tools, methods, and data openly to the entire scientific community.

Founded by MIT, Harvard, Harvard-affiliated hospitals, and the visionary Los Angeles philanthropists Eli and Edythe L. Broad, the Broad Institute includes faculty, professional staff, and students from throughout the MIT and Harvard biomedical research communities and beyond, with collaborations spanning over a hundred private and public institutions in more than 40 countries worldwide. To learn more, visit www.broadinstitute.org and follow @broadinstitute.

Biogen Safe Harbor
This news release contains forward-looking statements, including statements made pursuant to the safe harbor provisions of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995, about a COVID-19 biobank; potential research programs for COVID-19 and the related results; the potential advancement of COVID-19 science; and the anticipated benefits and potential of the consortium. These statements may be identified by words such as “aim,” “anticipate,” “believe,” “could,” “estimate,” “expect,” “forecast,” “goal,” “intend,” “may,” “plan,” “possible,” “potential,” “will,” “would,” and other words and terms of similar meaning. You should not place undue reliance on these statements or the scientific data presented.

These statements involve risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from those reflected in such statements, including without limitation actual timing and the research conducted by the consortium; uncertainty of success in the research efforts by the consortium; the risks of other unexpected hurdles, costs or delays; and third party collaboration risks. The foregoing sets forth many, but not all, of the factors that could cause actual results to differ from Biogen’s expectations in any forward-looking statement. Investors should consider this cautionary statement, as well as the risk factors identified in Biogen’s most recent annual or quarterly report and in other reports it has filed with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. These statements are based on Biogen’s current beliefs and expectations and speak only as of the date of this news release. Biogen does not undertake any obligation to publicly update any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future developments or otherwise.

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