Vertex Announces $50 Million Commitment to Health Equity With Three Initial Grants

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– Vertex grant to JDRF supports efforts to improve clinical trial diversity in type 1 diabetes –

– The Vertex Foundation grant supports the Mass General Comprehensive Sickle Cell Disease Treatment Center –

– Additional Vertex Foundation grant to Year Up to support health care workforce training –

BOSTON--(BUSINESS WIRE)--May 17, 2022-- Vertex Pharmaceuticals Incorporated (Nasdaq: VRTX) today announced that Vertex and the Vertex Foundation, a nonprofit charitable foundation, have committed $50 million over five years to clinical trial diversity, access to quality care, and education of our health care workforce. The donations are an extension of Vertex's long-standing commitment to inclusion, diversity and equity and the existing work of the Vertex Foundation to promote these values through education, innovation and various health programs.

"We're delighted to be working with Year Up, JDRF and the Massachusetts General Hospital, along with a number of other extraordinary organizations to advance our collective goal of having a more equitable society as a whole and a more equitable health care system in particular," said Reshma Kewalramani, M.D., Chief Executive Officer and President at Vertex. "In conjunction with our announcement today of the expansion of our cell and genetic therapies footprint, this $50 million commitment reflects our ongoing commitment to close the gaps in health care research, access, quality and patient outcomes for underrepresented communities."

Clinical trial diversity

JDRF, the leading global type 1 diabetes (T1D) research and advocacy organization, is broadening the understanding and awareness of T1D and getting more people involved in clinical trials, screening, monitoring and research. Vertex is supporting JDRF's efforts to improve clinical trial diversity which will help champion advanced care through clinical trial education, awareness and recruitment efforts, including diverse representation.

"JDRF is dedicated to supporting every individual diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. Vertex's support will allow us to expand our efforts to ensure understanding of the disease and knowledge of the most up-to-date treatment options to alleviate daily burdens," said Aaron Kowalski, Ph.D., JDRF International CEO. "As we continue to drive towards cures, we understand the importance of expansive and diverse clinical trials as part of the research process. JDRF is thankful to Vertex for their commitment to increase education and enrollment in clinical trials which will accelerate research progress and ultimately drive better outcomes for more people with diabetes."

Access to quality care

Approximately 98 percent of patients with sickle cell disease (SCD) are Black or African American, and rates of SCD are also higher among Latinx and other ethnicities than among White populations. The lack of access to quality health care for the disease coupled with issues associated with poverty — lack of nutritional food, stable housing and steady employment — leads to poo health outcomes. The Vertex Foundation is supporting the **Mass General Comprehensive Sickle Cell Disease Treatment Center**, which provides integrated, multidisciplinary care for this patient population that has not received the focused attention it deserves. In order to help the Center provide the best care for this disease, the funding will advance the Center's ability to provide holistic support to improve patient care through the expansion of social workers, patient coordinators and nurse navigators. In addition, support will expand programmatic efforts such as athletic training and survivorship programs.

"Massachusetts General Hospital has long been dedicated to identifying and addressing racial and ethnic disparities and achieving equity in our quality of care," said Joseph Betancourt, M.D., M.P.H., Senior Vice President of Equity and Community Health. "The Comprehensive Sickle Cell Center represents a long overdue step forward in the care and treatment of a serious disorder impacting primarily African Americans and communities of color."

"I want patients to feel there is somebody in their corner because this disease affects every facet of their lives," said Sharl Azar, M.D., Medical Director for the Mass General Comprehensive Sickle Cell Disease Treatment Center. "We want to provide a welcoming place where our patients feel safe, trusted, understood, heard, connected and well cared for — a true medical home."

Education of our health care workforce

In order to address a health care workforce and talent shortage across the state, the Vertex Foundation will partner with **Year Up**, a Boston-headquartered workforce development nonprofit, with funding to support a curriculum to prepare young adults for future careers in community health, paid internship opportunities and a source of skilled and trained professionals who reflect the populations they serve.

“Access to quality health care and the financial sustainability that comes with good jobs go hand in hand in building an equitable and just society,” said Gerald Chertavian, Founder and CEO of Year Up. “We are proud to partner with the Vertex Foundation to develop career pathways in health care services for underrepresented communities in Massachusetts.”

About the Vertex Foundation

The Vertex Foundation is a nonprofit charitable foundation. It seeks to improve the lives of people with serious diseases and in its communities through education, innovation and health programs. Established in 2017, the Foundation is a long-term source of charitable giving and is part of Vertex Pharmaceuticals’ corporate giving commitment. To learn more about the Vertex Foundation, visit https://www.vrtx.com/responsibility/vertex-foundation.

About Vertex

Vertex is a global biotechnology company that invests in scientific innovation to create transformative medicines for people with serious diseases. The company has multiple approved medicines that treat the underlying cause of cystic fibrosis (CF) — a rare, life-threatening genetic disease — and has several ongoing clinical and research programs in CF. Beyond CF,Vertex has a robust pipeline of investigational small molecule, cell and genetic therapies in other serious diseases where it has deep insight into causal human biology, including sickle cell disease, beta thalassemia, APOL1-mediated kidney disease, pain, type 1 diabetes, alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency and Duchenne muscular dystrophy.

Founded in 1989 in Cambridge, Mass., Vertex's global headquarters is now located in Boston's Innovation District and its international headquarters is in London. Additionally, the company has research and development sites and commercial offices in North America, Europe, Australia and Latin America. Vertex is consistently recognized as one of the industry's top places to work, including 12 consecutive years on Science magazine's Top Employers list and one of the 2021 Seramount (formerly Working Mother Media) 100 Best Companies. For company updates and to learn more about Vertex's history of innovation, visit www.vrtx.com or follow us on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and Instagram.

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