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**STATEMENT BY MIKE LEAVITT
Secretary of Health and Human Services
Regarding Announcement of Biomarkers Consortium**

For many years, Americans have understood that advances in basic biomedical science have the potential to bring about a new era in medical care. The sequencing of the human genome, combined with dramatic new capabilities at the molecular level of biology, hold out the promise that we will be able to understand and manage disease in ways never before possible.

For the patient, our goal is Personalized Health Care -- the recognition that every one of us is a unique biological being, and the capability to deliver highly individualized care tailored to genetic and molecular features that are central to health outcomes.

For the health care system, we are aiming toward much more effective development of diagnostics, drugs and other therapies. Our growing understanding of biological mechanisms can mean not only targeting therapies with much greater precision to each individual, but also safer, faster and more cost-effective development of these products.

But before these changes can occur for patients and for our health care system, we must also develop new ways to carry out the business of information discovery and sharing. As we seek to translate basic discoveries into bedside treatment, we need new tools for managing complex information on a new scale.

Collaboration is one key. We need to learn to work across sectors and across corporate barriers to make best use of fundamental new information. Likewise, we need common standards to make information manageable.

Interoperable health information technology is another key. With health IT, the potential for rapid forward movement is transformed. Without health IT we won't be able to accelerate rapidly the translation of research findings into improved health -- and won't be able to inform future research based on clinical experience.

Today's announcement of a Biomarkers Consortium is an important landmark on this journey. It represents a new step in sharing both the burdens and the fruits of fundamental scientific work. It can help identify areas of opportunity, clarify responsibilities, and make important new findings openly available. Most of all, it can help propel us toward an era of Personalized Health Care and improved development of medical treatments.

I congratulate and thank each of the parties that have worked to create this consortium.

Additional information is available at http://www.fnih.org/news/TBC_Press_Release.shtml.

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Note: All HHS press releases, fact sheets and other press materials are available at <http://www.hhs.gov/news>.