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For Immediate Release

**FIRST LYME & TICK-BORNE DISEASES RESEARCH CENTER TO OPEN AT
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER**

Time for Lyme and the Lyme Disease Association Endow Center for Lyme Research and Cure

Greenwich, CT, April 2007 – On April 30, The Lyme & Tick-borne Diseases Research Center (The Center) at Columbia University Medical Center will open its doors, making it the first in the country to focus on unraveling the complexities of these illnesses and offering hope to the thousands who struggle with them. Brian A. Fallon, MD, MPH, Associate Professor at the Columbia University Medical Center and the director of the Lyme Disease Research Program at the New York State Psychiatric Institute, will be its general director.

The Center will make one of the first goals the development of an accurate diagnostic test. The Center will use the latest in molecular genetics and proteomics to identify better diagnostic tests; it will conduct clinical research to evaluate new treatments and identify biomarkers that will better direct treatment; it will work to educate medical students and physicians on evaluating and treating Lyme & tick-borne diseases and it will support research projects internationally to help speed the scientific process of ultimately finding a cure for these diseases.

Other areas of concentration will include the presence of comorbid infections in ticks and comorbid diseases in chronically ill patients; improved understanding of the pathophysiologic mechanism of disease, particularly as it relates to chronic Lyme disease; genetic studies to identify vulnerability factors within families; neuroimaging to better understand the brain mechanisms of disease; treatment trials to examine the efficacy of a wide range of therapeutic interventions, and further study of the neurologic and neuropsychiatric manifestations of Lyme disease.

“The official establishment of the Lyme & Tick-Borne Disease Research Center at Columbia University could not come at a better time,” notes Debbie Siciliano, co-president and founder of Time for Lyme, Inc., a research, education and advocacy group headquartered in Greenwich, CT. “At a time when Lyme and other tick-borne illnesses are becoming more prevalent, with 49 of the 50 states and the District of Columbia reporting cases, some treatment guidelines are marginalizing our efforts to understand, diagnose, treat and cure this disease,” Siciliano adds. Siciliano is referring to the repressive Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) Guideline, which is creating the controversy that could effectively deny treatment to thousands of Lyme disease patients.

“By reaching our fund-raising goal of \$3 million to open the Center, Time for Lyme (TFL) and the Lyme Disease Association (LDA)’s achievement now enables a major research thrust to take place”. “Those IDSA guideline threaten scientific progress and undermine the biggest medical issues of our time. The good news is that researchers at Columbia are stepping up to the plate and it is time take a leap forward for research,” adds Siciliano.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that about 23,000 cases of Lyme disease are diagnosed each year in the U.S. However, the CDC agrees that its own estimates are low, and Lyme experts believe the actual number of new cases each year exceed 230,000. Not only does controversy exist about the guidelines, but also the number of cases reported. Part of the problem is getting states to count cases in a uniform manner. No one really knows the true incidence of Lyme disease.

Dr. Fallon notes, “The current controversy underscores our crucial need for the Lyme & Tick-Borne Diseases Research Center at Columbia, and for the more definitive research on Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses we will conduct here – particularly in their chronic stages.” He and many other Lyme specialists believe chronic Lyme disease causes serious long-term effects – from cardiovascular and lung problems to neurological deficiencies and joint disorders – in 10-25% of all Lyme disease patients.

The Center at Columbia University will establish an integrative research program with state of the art and visionary research. Dr. Fallon explains, "Because the Center will focus on basic science and clinical research, we will have the ability to connect the diagnostic questions and treatment issues that have puzzled the medical community for decades with the scientists who have access to the powerful biotechnological tools that are transforming modern medicine. It's the questions that emerge from working with individuals and subgroups of patients with Lyme disease that will play a key role in shaping the direction of laboratory studies," he concludes.

Time for Lyme's Debbie Siciliano notes that, while the generosity of donors enabled her organization to help endow the Lyme & Tick-Borne Diseases Research Center at Columbia, their job is far from over. "We are mindful that now the real work begins. With research programs targeting better diagnostics and, ultimately, a cure, we envision speedy progress to help eradicate Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses," Siciliano explains.

About Time for Lyme

Time For Lyme, Inc., affiliate of Lyme Disease Association, is an organization dedicated to eliminating the devastating effects of Lyme disease and other tick-borne illness. Our mission is to prevent the spread of disease, develop definitive diagnostic tools and effective treatments, and to ultimately find a cure for tick-borne illness by supporting research, education, and the acquisition and dissemination of information. In addition, we will continue to act as advocates for Lyme disease sufferers and their families through support of legislative reform on the federal, state and local levels. For more information on our organization, please visit www.timeforlyme.org.

About the Lyme Disease Association

The Lyme Disease Association (LDA) is a national nonprofit volunteer organization that devotes ninety-eight percent of its funds to programs—funding research, education, prevention and patient support. LDA-funded research has been published in peer review including JAMA, Neurology, Infection, and the Proceedings of the National Academy of Science. Recognizing that the ability to find solutions involves a multi-disciplinary effort, the LDA has partnered with businesses, patient groups, celebrities, government, and the medical community to unlock the secrets of Lyme and other tick-borne diseases. LDA is currently planning its 8th fully CME accredited medical conference for physicians on Lyme and other tick-borne diseases. To order free brochures, to learn about LDA's LymeAid 4 Kids fund for families without insurance, or to find out more about Lyme disease, visit LymeDiseaseAssociation.org.

About Dr. Brian A. Fallon

Brian A. Fallon, MD, MPH, Associate Professor at the Columbia University Medical Center, is the director of the Lyme Disease Research Program at the New York State Psychiatric Institute. A graduate of Harvard College, he obtained his M.D. degree from the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, as well as a master's degree in public health epidemiology from Columbia University. Dr. Fallon is the recipient of over \$10 million in federal and private foundation grants, with work spanning infectious disease, neuropsychiatry, and neurology. Dr. Fallon's publications have focused on chronic Lyme disease, its diverse manifestations in children and adults, the impact of Lyme disease on the brain, and controlled treatment trials. He has presented his research internationally and before members of Congress, the CDC, NIH, and HHS. Recent research has focused on the search for better diagnostic tests and biomarkers of treatment response.