



Biodefense solutions to protect our nation

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USAMRIID Scientist Named to List of Ten Outstanding Young Americans

Dr. Lisa Hensley, a civilian microbiologist at the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases, has been selected as one of this year's Ten Outstanding Young Americans (TOYA) by the United States Junior Chamber, better known as the Jaycees. The presentation of the 69th annual black-tie awards ceremony will be held September 22, 2007, in Omaha, Nebraska.

According to the organization's website, the TOYA project is designed to recognize and honor ten Americans each year who exemplify the best attributes of the nation's young people, aged 18 through 40. Hensley has joined an elite group of more than 600 Americans so honored, including John F. Kennedy, Gale Sayers, and Elvis Presley.

USAMRIID Commander COL George W. Korch, Jr., nominated the 35-year-old Hensley, saying it is "rare to be able to acknowledge remarkable contributions so early in the professional life of a scientist," but that Hensley's progress in helping the medical community understand the pathogenesis of many of the world's deadliest diseases earned her the award. He added that for the past nine years, "she has labored quietly, effectively and without fanfare in service to the nation and the government," and has served as "a very visible role model to other young women in science and academia."

Hensley has emerged as one of the premier scientists in the discovery of the pathogenesis of several of the world's most dangerous infectious diseases, including Ebola hemorrhagic fever, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), and smallpox. She and her colleagues have identified critical mechanisms involved in the disease process of highly fatal hemorrhagic fever viruses. They have also discovered that a particular protein signal within the normal coagulation system is overly expressed in the infected host; this protein is a key molecule to target for a therapeutic intervention.

Hensley has been able to translate these discoveries into developing candidate therapeutics, one for SARS and at least two for Ebola. In addition, she and her colleagues

have successfully developed a model for the Food and Drug Administration to evaluate licensing of new vaccines and therapies for smallpox.

Her nomination reads, in part, “Not limiting herself to work with just animal models or therapeutics, Hensley has whole-heartedly embraced the mission of USAMRIID and willingly jumped into research projects wherever she could contribute. Not only has she helped in the design and execution of experiments to evaluate the usefulness of different candidate vaccines, but she has also been responsible for designing critical methods of monitoring and evaluating the immune response. This information will be critical in developing new and potentially improved vaccines against a wide range of infectious disease threats. Hensley’s contributions will collectively help provide clarity and forward progress in struggling with some of the most complex technical issues that sit at the center of defense against biological terrorism.”

In her brief career, Hensley has already co-authored 43 publications in peer-reviewed scientific journals. She has also served as co-author for three invited book chapters in science texts. She was recently asked to chair a symposium at the Seventh Annual American Society for Microbiology Biodefense Conference in Washington, D.C., covering the topic of viral pathogenesis, and has given numerous lectures on the national and international stage. Her laboratory currently receives \$10 million in federal grants and is staffed by four postdoctoral fellows and three technicians.

A native of Winston-Salem, N.C., Hensley earned both a Ph.D. and MSPH in epidemiology from the University of North Carolina, School of Public Health. She holds an MHS in immunology and public health from the Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health in Baltimore, Md.

Hensley joined USAMRIID in 1998 as a research associate in the Pathology Division, having previously served as a staff fellow at the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, part of the National Institutes of Health. She also held various teaching and research assistant posts at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and at Duke University Medical Center in Durham, N.C.

Hensley, her husband Jim Corkum, and their son James Michael reside in Frederick, Md.

USAMRIID, located at Fort Detrick, Md., is the lead medical research laboratory for the U.S. Biological Defense Research Program, and plays a key role in national defense and in infectious disease research. The Institute’s mission is to conduct basic and applied research on biological threats resulting in medical solutions (such as vaccines, drugs and diagnostics) to protect the warfighter. USAMRIID is a subordinate laboratory of the U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command.

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