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THE CFIDS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, INC
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CFIDS Association of America Names New Scientific Director To Advance Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Research

Charlotte, North Carolina—November 7, 2007. The CFIDS Association of America announced today that Suzanne Vernon, PhD, has been named scientific director and will lead the Association's research program for chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS). She will oversee Association-funded research grants, foster opportunities for data sharing and collaboration among CFS researchers worldwide, and help build a framework for accelerating the pace of research through multidisciplinary, translational research.

To support these research initiatives, the CFIDS Association is announcing a new campaign to raise a million dollars over a one-year period to fuel the program. This is the largest research campaign for CFS to date in the United States.

The post of scientific director was created to enable the CFIDS Association to focus on facilitating new networks of communication and collaboration—and strengthening existing networks—among researchers doing basic science and clinicians on the front line of patient care.

Dr. Vernon has 17 years of experience as a microbiologist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), where she helped identify viral markers that predict cervical cancer before moving into the CFS research group at the agency in 1996. She led the CDC's chronic fatigue syndrome Molecular Epidemiology Program for the past decade, and her team was one of the first research teams in the world to apply human genomics and genetics to identify biologic and diagnostic correlates of CFS.

"Dr. Vernon's CFS research background and broad skill set makes her the ideal choice for this new position," said Kimberly McCleary, president and CEO of the CFIDS Association. "Dr. Vernon helped pioneer the application of proteomics and genomics to chronic fatigue syndrome at the CDC, and now she will help our organization pioneer a new model for speeding the progress of CFS research and translating the science for health care professionals and patients to move clinical care forward and ultimately lead to more effective treatments."

Dr. Vernon says it's not uncommon for there to be a huge gap between science and medicine, and that CFS is no exception. "There has been tremendous progress made by CFS researchers around the world in the last decade," she said. "We now understand an enormous amount about the pathophysiology of CFS, and about the body systems that are broken or altered by this disease. Now it's time to move the entire field forward by encouraging the kind of collaboration and communication among scientists that propels research to the next stage and to spearhead empiric diagnostic efforts and new treatment interventions."

Benjamin Luft, MD, a professor and infectious disease specialist at SUNY at Stony Brook, said today, "The appointment of Suzanne Vernon as the scientific director of the CFIDS Association is

a coup for both the Association and all who care about understanding and treating this elusive condition. Over the years, Dr. Vernon has been an important part of the leadership of a multidisciplinary systems biology effort at the CDC to understand the intricate dysregulation that occurs with chronic fatigue syndrome. In bringing together various disciplines from computational biology and genomics to epidemiology and clinical medicine, this work serves as a paradigm for understanding diseases that are caused by a multiplicity of factors. Ultimately, this knowledge is our best hope for effective therapy.”

Nancy Klimas, MD, an internationally recognized CFS researcher and clinician based at the University of Miami, believes this new research vision “is the next imperative step for the CFS field to help move the body of science forward into pathophysiologic and subgroup-based clinical intervention studies.” She added, “Dr. Vernon has shown a unique ability to bring experts from divergent fields together. She has tremendous enthusiasm for this work, and her compassion for patients afflicted with this illness is obvious. She is deeply respected by the scientific community, and I can think of no better choice for this important position.”

Specific priorities that Dr. Vernon will address for the CFIDS Association include:

- Leading the Association’s own research grants program, which has funded \$4.8 million in research so far, to expedite progress in the search for biomarkers, treatments and a cure
- Building strong collaborations with CFS researchers across the world to identify synergies, gaps and opportunities that warrant higher priority
- Developing new opportunities for scientists to share ideas, knowledge and data to advance the field
- Surveying other fields of research for findings and scientific approaches of potential relevance to CFS
- Assisting in efforts to secure a new infusion of federal research funding for CFS
- Attracting new investigators from a number of disciplines to the field of CFS research.

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About the CFIDS Association of America

The CFIDS Association was founded in 1987 to stimulate high-quality CFS research, improve the ability of health care professionals to diagnose and manage the illness, secure a meaningful response to CFS from the federal government, provide educational information for patients and their families, and build widespread public awareness of CFS. The organization has invested more than \$25 million in education, public policy and research and is the largest charitable funder and advocate of CFS research in the U.S. These research announcements are made as part of a yearlong commemoration of the Association’s 20 years of service.

About Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS)

Chronic fatigue syndrome affects more than a million Americans. Historically, CFS has been difficult to diagnose and treat because there is no diagnostic test and no therapy that treats the illness at its core, instead of simply treating the symptoms. Diagnosis and treatment are further complicated because the symptoms and severity of CFS can vary considerably, both over time for individual patients and from patient to patient.

CFS is characterized by at least six months of profound, incapacitating fatigue and postexertional relapse—a worsening of symptoms following physical or mental activity. Other defining symptoms include impaired memory or concentration, sleep problems, muscle pain, joint pain, headaches, sore throat and tender lymph nodes.

To learn more about CFS, visit <http://www.cfids.org>.