



Statement from Richard Chin, M.D., Chief Executive Officer at the Institute for OneWorld Health, on the Release of the Joint UNICEF-WHO Diarrheal Disease Report and Global Handwashing Day

October 15th marks the second annual Global Handwashing Day, which is aimed at using simple soap and water precautions to prevent against the transmission of common illnesses such as diarrhea, which claims over 1.5 million child lives annually. However, handwashing is just the first step. A number of different preventive and treatment methods must be employed if we are to make significant headway toward the UN Millennium Development Goals of reducing global poverty, stemming child deaths by two-thirds and improving the health and welfare of people everywhere by 2015.

According to the World Health Statistics Report in 2009, the biggest risk factors for developing diarrheal diseases like cholera and rotavirus infections in the developing world include unsafe water supply, inadequate hygiene and sanitation. Handwashing and other prophylactic measures, such as vaccinations, are a key step toward stemming child deaths. But other measures are also needed. Early nutrition intervention, in the form of breastfeeding, micronutrient solutions and oral rehydration solutions with zinc, are key tools in our efforts to stem morbidity and mortality from diarrhea. At OneWorld Health, we are working to discover, develop and deliver novel treatments for diarrheal disease that are safe, effective and affordable for people who need them the most but can afford them the least.

We look forward to collaborating with a coalition of global stakeholders in reducing the burden of suffering caused by this devastating disease.

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About the Institute for OneWorld Health

The Institute for OneWorld Health, the first US nonprofit pharmaceutical company, develops safe, effective and affordable medicines for people with neglected diseases of the developing world. The Institute for OneWorld Health, headquartered in San Francisco, California, USA, is a tax-exempt 501 (c) (3) US corporation. (<http://www.oneworldhealth.org/>). Media resources are available at <http://www.oneworldhealth.org/media/index.php/>.