AMERICAN SOCIETY OF TROPICAL MEDICINE AND HYGIENE

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For Immediate Release

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Statement by James W. Kazura, MD, President, American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene (ASTMH), On World Malaria Day, April 25, 2012:

"This is unacceptable: A child under five dies from malaria every minute."

"This week ASTMH stands with our global partners and individuals around the world to mark World Malaria Day. Last year over 650,000 people died of malaria. For parents in the United States, this disease may have some name recognition. For millions of parents mostly in Africa, this disease is feared and with good reason. Eighty-five percent of these deaths were among children under five and 90 percent were in sub-Saharan Africa.

In addition, effects of this disease cost Africa at least $12 billion a year in lost economic productivity and in several African countries, up to 40 per cent of health care resources are spent treating it. Yet, malaria is entirely preventable and treatable.

As a result of determination and resources, significant progress has been made over the past decade to control malaria in countries where it takes its heaviest toll. Insecticide treated bed nets have dramatically curtailed malaria. Last fall brought news of the first promising malaria vaccine candidate, RTS,S, developed, in part, through foundational work done at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research.

Continued U.S. investment in malaria R&D will sustain these hard won gains and enable us to reach new successes. With sufficient resources and working together through new and existing public and private partnerships we can build the pipeline of new products, develop novel interventions and innovative strategies to diagnose, treat and prevent malaria as well as interrupt its transmission and perhaps of most concern, address the issue of resistance to current anti-malarial drugs."

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