

## Summary

### NIAID Blue Ribbon Panel on Vaccine Research

March 26, 1993

#### **Introduction**

Support for vaccine research and development has been a major priority for NIAID since its inception. Recent developments in immunization have reinforced the importance of vaccines not only in disease control but also in the control of health care costs.

Vaccines are arguably the most powerful tools ever developed for the primary prevention of disease. The eradication of smallpox was possible because a simple, effective, and inexpensive vaccine was available. The eradication of polio from the Americas appears to be in view, and the possibility of global eradication of this infection seems a realistic goal. It is important to acknowledge that in the United States vaccines are used with two objectives in mind—to protect the individual from disease and to control epidemic or endemic infectious disease in the community. Vaccines provide a safe, cost-effective, and efficient way of preventing disease, disability, and death from infectious diseases such as measles, pertussis, diphtheria, influenza, and many others. This benefit to the community is achieved only when effective public health programs exist.

During the last two months, the Clinton Administration has reaffirmed that vaccines are not only essential for improving and assuring the health of the Nation's children but that vaccines also are effective for controlling ever-rising health care costs. As a consequence, the Administration has launched a broad-based effort to enhance and improve immunization. This initiative includes additional support for vaccine research.

Because it is the lead agency within the National Institutes of Health for the support of vaccine research, NIAID sought the advice of a panel of experts on the plans and proposals NIAID has to expand its research efforts in vaccines. NIAID—with an integrated and comprehensive research program in infectious diseases, immunology, vaccinology, and microbiology—is uniquely poised to expand its vaccine research program to take advantage of growing scientific opportunities to develop new, safe vaccines that will improve immunization coverage and prevent diseases not currently preventable by immunization.