



News Release

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MSD and One Disease Announce \$1.2 Million to Improve Indigenous Life Expectancy

SYDNEY, Australia, 24 June 2015 – The goal of closing the life-expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians is now one-step closer thanks to a \$1.2 million donation to the cause today.

MSD in Australia, a subsidiary of Merck & Co. Inc. donated \$600,000 to not-for-profit organisation One Disease, which is also being matched dollar-for-dollar by an unnamed benefactor.

One Disease aims to eliminate preventable disease, one at a time from remote Indigenous communities.

First on the hit list is scabies, a preventable disease that contributes to premature death in remote Indigenous communities. It currently affects 70 per cent of Indigenous children in remote communities at least once before their first birthday*.

The new funding will support two skin-health nurses to identify and manage the severe form of scabies in East and West Arnhem Land. The nurses will assist in training local clinics and educating both clinics and households with recurrent scabies problems.

The lessons learned will be used to develop best practice guidelines for scabies management across the country.

Dr Susanne Fiedler, Managing Director of MSD in Australia says the donation is part of MSD's overall commitment to address complex public health challenges through investments that address the barriers to health care.

"At MSD, our responsibility to help reduce the burden of disease is at the heart of our mission to improve and save lives.

"Addressing public health issues begins with our unwavering commitment to the research and development of innovative therapies and approaches to meet critical, unmet medical needs. We are proud to partner with One Disease and support their work to address scabies in Australia."

“We warmly thank MSD for this donation and extend our heartfelt thanks to the unnamed benefactor who has generously matched the contribution dollar-for-dollar,” said One Disease Founder and Chairman, Dr Sam Prince.

“These funds will bring us one step closer to our goal to empower Indigenous Australians to self-manage scabies, reduce the disease burden and ultimately, eliminate the severe form of the disease by 2030.”

(ENDS)

Issued by Ethical Strategies on behalf of MSD Australia.

*One Disease, Top End Northern Territory 2014

About Scabies

Scabies is a contagious disease caused by a small mite that burrows under the skin. This triggers an immune response to control the mites reproducing, causing irritation. Scratching the skin leads to the development of sores and potentially bacterial infections. What presents as an innocent itch, if untreated, can lead to kidney failure, rheumatic heart fever and ultimately premature death. The disease is spread by skin-to-skin contact. Mothers, young children and the elderly are particularly vulnerable groups. As one of the most common dermatological conditions, it affects more than 130 million people globally at any time.

About One Disease

One Disease is a not-for-profit organisation that aims to eliminate disease from Indigenous communities, one disease at a time. Founded by Dr Sam Prince in 2010, One Disease currently works with 28 communities across the Northern Territory to address scabies by empowering the communities to self-manage the disease. For more information visit www.1disease.org

About MSD and Merck & Co., Inc.

MSD is a global health care leader working to help the world be well. MSD is a tradename of Merck & Co. Inc., with headquarters in New Jersey, U.S.A. Through our prescription medicines, vaccines, biologic therapies and animal health products, we work with customers and operate in more than 140 countries to deliver innovative health solutions. We also demonstrate our commitment to increasing access to health care through far-reaching policies, programs and partnerships. For more information visit www.msd-australia.com.au.