

Basel, 25 July 2011

## **Roche to provide HIV/AIDS tests for Early Infant Diagnosis in South Africa** **Early testing helps reduce the impact of HIV on infants**

Roche (SIX: RO, ROG; OTCQX: RHHBY) announced today that it has been awarded an exclusive contract by the National Health Laboratory Services (NHLS) in South Africa for the support of the Early Infant Diagnosis (EID) Programme. Roche will deliver diagnostics to support the largest infant testing initiative in the world that aims to identify HIV-infected children during the first months of life. Infants can be tested with Roche's diagnostics using the Dried Blood Sampling (DBS) technique, with which a spot of blood is preserved on filter paper and then sent to a testing centre. This technique is less stressful for the mother and the child, eliminates the need for refrigeration and drastically reduces the volume of blood to be stored or transported.

This marks a further step in over a decade of partnership between Roche, the NHLS and key stakeholders who have been the pioneers of Early Infant Testing in Africa and remain committed to providing workable solutions to the unique challenges of expanding EID testing.

“We are proud of the work achieved in partnership with the NHLS in helping diagnose infants born from HIV-positive mothers. The ability to determine the HIV status of an infant as early as six weeks is crucial to determining the appropriate care and support for these HIV-positive children” said Daniel O’Day, COO Roche Diagnostics “With EID and other programmes, we reiterate our commitment to healthcare solutions which make a real difference to children in South Africa.”

Early diagnosis is critical for children infected with HIV. If found HIV positive, they can receive appropriate medical care before they develop significant illness, and can remain healthy despite their infection. If found HIV negative, they can get appropriate counseling to ensure an HIV-free status. Diagnosing HIV in infants and young children is a major challenge. Antibody tests are ineffective in children because the mother’s antibodies remain in the child’s system from birth. In fact, antibody tests in infants may yield false positive results for up to 15 months. There are a number of alternate methods available for early diagnosis of HIV-

infected infants. Many approaches use molecular techniques, specifically detecting the viral DNA and/or RNA, which enables HIV diagnosis as early as six weeks.

### **The Roche AmpliCare programme**

Founded in South Africa in 2002, the AmpliCare initiative is a multifaceted programme that seeks to increase access to diagnostics and monitoring tests in HIV/AIDS to developing countries, along with education programmes to support the use of tests and treatment. Through the programme, Roche supplies HIV diagnostic and viral load tests at the lowest possible price in sub-Saharan Africa, South America and the Least Developed Countries, as defined by the United Nations. In 2010, Roche launched a simple and rapid test to detect mycobacterium tuberculosis (MTB). Roche Diagnostics works in partnership with international agencies, local communities, hospitals and the William J. Clinton Presidential Foundation to create a programme that provides far more than just diagnostic tests. To date, through AmpliCare, over 1,100,000 infants have been tested for HIV and around 560,000 patients on HIV/AIDS therapy have had their viral levels monitored. For more information: [www.roche.com/amplicare](http://www.roche.com/amplicare).

### **About National Health Laboratory Service (NHLS)**

The NHLS is the largest diagnostic pathology service in South Africa with the responsibility of supporting the national and provincial health departments in the delivery of healthcare. The NHLS provides laboratory and related public health services to over 80% of the population through a national network laboratories. For more information: [www.nhls.ac.za](http://www.nhls.ac.za).

### **About Roche**

Headquartered in Basel, Switzerland, Roche is a leader in research-focused healthcare with combined strengths in pharmaceuticals and diagnostics. Roche is the world's largest biotech company with truly differentiated medicines in oncology, virology, inflammation, metabolism and CNS. Roche is also the world leader in in-vitro diagnostics, tissue-based cancer diagnostics and a pioneer in diabetes management. Roche's personalised healthcare strategy aims at providing medicines and diagnostic tools that enable tangible improvements in the health, quality of life and survival of patients. In 2010, Roche had over 80'000 employees worldwide and invested over 9 billion Swiss francs in R&D. The Group posted sales of 47.5 billion Swiss francs. Genentech, United States, is a wholly owned member of the Roche Group. Roche has a majority stake in Chugai Pharmaceutical, Japan. For more information: [www.roche.com](http://www.roche.com).

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