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**World Health Organization Official Honored with
\$250,000 Heinz Award for the Human Condition**

**Dr. David L. Heymann recognized for pioneering reforms
in global defense against infectious disease**

PITTSBURGH, September 12, 2007 – A physician-turned-international health advocate whose foresight, wisdom and leadership have helped better prepare nations around the world against the spread of contagious disease has been selected to receive the 13th annual Heinz Award for the Human Condition, among the largest individual achievement prizes in the world.

Dr. David L. Heymann, 61, of Geneva, Switzerland, the assistant director of communicable diseases at the World Health Organization (WHO) and a driving force behind widespread reforms in reporting and controlling the proliferation of infectious disease, is among six distinguished Americans selected to receive one of the \$250,000 awards, presented in five categories by the Heinz Family Foundation.

“Dr. Heymann's work has the potential to save millions of lives both here at home and around the world,” said Teresa Heinz, chairman of the Heinz Family Foundation. “Using science to trump politics, he has persuaded nations to share data on disease exposure within their borders, which is information they often want to hide. By forcefully and relentlessly making the case that disease respects no borders and can threaten the security of all nations, he has made it possible to orchestrate a global response to the outbreak of disease.”

Through his forceful and insistent leadership, Dr. Heymann has elevated WHO's role as a global clearinghouse of information on disease outbreaks around the world, a new important status for the U.N. agency and one that positions it as a first line of defense against both naturally occurring and deliberately caused biological threats. By overcoming both internal administrative hurdles and the considerable reluctance of some foreign governments to share disease-related information, his efforts have dramatically improved global disease surveillance systems and the rapid response to disease outbreak.

Prior to joining WHO's staff in 1988 to work on AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, Dr. Heymann spent 13 years in sub-Saharan Africa with the U.S.-based Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, where he specialized in childhood immunizable diseases, malaria and diarrheal diseases of children, human monkeypox and the investigation of the first and second outbreaks of Ebola. After a recurring outbreak of the Ebola virus in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 1995, he recognized the deficiencies in the handling of widespread disease outbreak, particularly its tracking and control. A year later, he accepted a request by the director general to set up an emerging infectious disease program, adopting the use of the Internet and other modern communications, as well as a network of institutions across the globe capable of monitoring and responding to new outbreaks.

This effectiveness and necessity of this surveillance and response program became dramatically clear in 2003 with the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in Hong Kong, Vietnam, China and Canada. As a result of Dr. Heymann's initiative – resulting from his ability to persuade a disparate group of governments, laboratories and businesses to share information – WHO is widely credited with coordinating the global containment of the disease. Following the outbreak of the avian influenza (“bird flu”) in Southeast Asia in 2004, he helped formulate a five-step plan to monitor human cases of infection and ensure global preparedness in the event of a human influenza pandemic.

In 2005, Dr. Heymann spearheaded reforms to the reporting requirements of WHO's 193 member states, helping win the passage of International Health Regulations, which provides a framework for international actions that might need to be taken in the event of a global infectious disease pandemic. He also is running the WHO program that aims to eradicate polio, applying knowledge he obtained from two years' work in smallpox eradication during the 1970s, and bringing new innovations toward completing polio eradication worldwide.

“Infectious diseases know no borders and are indiscriminate in selecting their targets, and so it is critical that we mount a global defense against them,” Dr. Heymann said. “I’ve been proud of the role that the World Health Organization has played as an international leader in monitoring and controlling the spread of communicable diseases, and while we still have much work to do, I believe we have built a strong foundation from which to build. I am grateful for the Heinz Award and regard this honor as a validation that we are, in fact, making an important difference.”

Since 1993, the Heinz Family Foundation of Pittsburgh has recognized individuals whose dedication, skill and generosity of spirit represent the best of the human qualities that the late Sen. Heinz, for whom the award is named, held so dear.

Presented in five categories, the other Heinz Award recipients are:

- **Arts and Humanities: Dave Eggers**, San Francisco, author and founder of the 826 Valencia writing laboratories as well as a publishing house for emerging writers
- **Environment (co-recipients): Bernard Amadei**, Ph.D., Boulder, Colo., engineer, professor and founder of Engineers without Borders - USA; and **Susan Seacrest**, Lincoln, Neb., environmental advocate and founder of the Groundwater Foundation
- **Public Policy: Donald M. Berwick**, M.D., Cambridge, Mass., physician, professor and health care reformer

- **Technology, the Economy and Employment: Hugh Herr, Ph.D., Cambridge, Mass.,** inventor, professor and pioneer in biomechantronics

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About the Heinz Foundation

The Heinz Family Foundation, one of the Heinz Family Philanthropies, began as a charitable trust established by the late Sen. Heinz in 1984. His widow, Teresa Heinz, created the Heinz Awards in 1993 as the primary activity of the foundation. In addition to the Heinz Awards, the foundation directs a grant-making program that is active in a wide range of issues, principally those concerning women's health and environment, health care cost and coverage, as well as pensions and retirement security.

Nominations for the Heinz Awards are submitted by an invited Council of Nominators, all experts in their fields, who serve anonymously. Award recipients are selected by the board of directors for the Heinz Awards upon recommendation by a blue-ribbon panel of jurors in each category.

Past recipients of the Heinz Awards include marine biologist Jane Lubchenco, inventor and founder of the student robotics competition FIRST Dean Kamen, environmental advocate Peggy Shepard, medical anthropologist Paul Farmer, artist and community activist Rick Lowe and Paul Anastas, a leader in the "green chemistry" movement.

In addition to the \$250,000 award for their unrestricted use, recipients are presented with a medallion inscribed with the image of Sen. Heinz on one side and a rendering of a globe passing between two hands on the other. The medallion symbolizes the partnership, continuity and values carried on to the next generation. The hands also suggest passing on the stewardship of the earth to future generations.

The Heinz Awards will be presented at a private ceremony on October 22 in Pittsburgh.

Additional information is available online at www.heinzawards.net.

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