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Foundation Congratulates Dr. Collins and Dr. Bird

WASHINGTON, DC (October 7, 2009)— The COPD Foundation congratulates National Institutes of Health (NIH) Director Dr. Francis Collins and Dr. Forrest M. Bird of Percussionaire Corp., ID. Both were among 14 top researchers and innovators recently named by President Barack Obama as recipients of the National Medal of Science and the National Medal of Technology and Innovation, respectively.

These high honors, which were awarded to nine researchers, four inventors and one company, will be distributed in a White House ceremony today.

Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary of Health and Human Services said she applauded President Obama's selection of Dr. Collins.

"As Director of the NIH, Dr. Collins is continuing the world that has defined his career: pushing the boundaries of science and finding new ways to translate these discoveries into real improvements in people's lives," Sebelius said in a statement.

"Dr. Collins epitomizes this administration's commitment to science. The National Medal of Science is the nation's highest honor of its kind," she said. "I congratulate Dr. Collins for this well-deserved honor and am grateful for his service at the NIH where he is overseeing our efforts to make new strides in biomedical research and apply this research to help all Americans live longer, healthier, richer lives."

The National Medal of Science was created by statute in 1959 and recognizes individuals who have made outstanding contributions to science and engineering.

Dr. Bird said he was both surprised and humbled by the "real honor" of receiving the award, and that he had to thank all of the people who have helped him over his lifetime.

"If, early in life, you like what you do, you make mistakes—of course you make mistakes—but you learn, and stay with it. I believe so much in what I've done over the years," he said, adding, "that's how you arrive at this point—you never give up."

The National Medal of Technology and Innovation began in 1980 and recognizes individuals or companies for their outstanding contributions to the promotion of technology for the improvement of the economic, environmental, or social well-being of the United States.

“I feel humbled, I really do,” Bird said. “It’s a fantastic award—it’s in technology and that’s my field. It makes my life all worthwhile.”

This year’s recipients are:

National Medal of Science

Dr. Berni Alder, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, CA
Dr. Francis Collins, National Institutes of Health, MD
Dr. Joanna Fowler, Brookhaven National Laboratory, NY
Dr. Elaine Fuchs, The Rockefeller University, NY
Dr. James Gunn, Princeton University, NJ
Dr. Rudolf Kalman, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich
Dr. Michael Posner, University of Oregon, OR
Dr. JoAnne Stubbe, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, MA
Dr. J. Craig Venter, J. Craig Venter Institute, MD & CA

National Medal of Technology and Innovation

Dr. Forrest M. Bird, Percussionaire Corp., ID
Dr. Esther Sans Takeuchi, University at Buffalo, SUNY, NY
Team: Dr. John E. Warnock and Dr. Charles M. Geschke (Adobe Systems Inc., CA)
Company: IBM Corporation, NY

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