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# THE HARRIET JOYCE FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES GROUNDBREAKING GENOMIC NEWBORN SCREENING INITIATIVE TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF CHILDREN IN ECUADOR

## Gift to Boston-based Brigham and Women's Hospital, a teaching hospital of Harvard Medical School, to support early detection of pediatric genetic disorders

**Reston, VA–October 9, 2024**—The Harriet Joyce Foundation is thrilled to announce a $2.4 million gift to Boston-based Brigham and Women's Hospital to support a groundbreaking genomic newborn screening initiative aimed at transforming healthcare in Ecuador. The gift to the Brigham, a founding member of Mass General Brigham and a teaching hospital of Harvard Medical School, will enable Brigham researchers to develop a low-cost, genomic sequencing panel that will be used to detect pediatric genetic disorders. Once developed, an independent board of world class experts will make a formal recommendation to the Minister of Health of Ecuador of the panel it should implement for newborn screening in the country of Ecuador.

"We're committed to offering every child the best start in life," says Antonio Naranjo Paz y Mino, MSC, Ecuador's Minister of Health. "By integrating gene sequencing into Ecuador's newborn screening program, we'll not only save lives but also revolutionize pediatric care in our country, as we will be able to detect conditions early and intervene quickly. With the invaluable support of the Brigham and the Harriet Joyce Foundation, we will deliver world-class care, to give every child a better shot at a healthy future."

A leader in newborn care, the Brigham is the largest birthing center in Massachusetts, with nearly 7,000 births annually. With this gift from the Harriet Joyce Foundation, Richard Parad, MD, MPH, director of the Neonatal Genomic Program at the Brigham and associate professor of pediatrics at Harvard Medical School, along with genomics innovator Arindam Bhattacharjee, PhD, will lead an initiative to leverage state-of-the-art genomic technologies to screen newborns for a wide array of genetic disorders.

"Each year, millions of newborns worldwide can go undiagnosed for treatable genetic disorders that could be detected pre-symptomatically through genomic screening," says Parad. "By integrating advanced genomic screening methods into routine newborn care, we can address pediatric health risks early and take a proactive approach to treatment."

"This initiative is a game-changer for the children and families of Ecuador," says Jeffrey Himmel, president of the Harriet Joyce Foundation. "By significantly enhancing the existing newborn screening program in Ecuador, which currently screens for four disorders, we can leapfrog forward with new technology that can identify more than 2,000 pediatric disorders, more than 500 of which are treatable or manageable."

"Gene sequencing also enables the development of personalized treatment plans, improving treatment outcomes," adds Bhattacharjee. "In the case of many rare diseases caused by genetic mutations, gene sequencing can provide accurate diagnoses, often ending long diagnostic odysseys for patients and their families. Early and precise diagnosis can lead to better management and treatment options."

"Our ultimate goal is to save and improve the quality of life for countless children and their families," Himmel says.

**About the Harriet Joyce Foundation**

The Harriet Joyce Foundation is committed to enhancing public health and advancing medical research, with a special focus on child health and inherited disorders. Founded with the mission to identify and overcome barriers to child development, the foundation supports innovative healthcare initiatives and collaborates with leading experts to improve healthcare outcomes. Through its dedication to research and community engagement, the Harriet Joyce Foundation aims to create a healthier future for children and families in Ecuador and beyond.

All initiatives of the Harriet Joyce Foundation in Ecuador are conducted in collaboration with the Universidad de Especialidades Espíritu Santo (UEES) and Alianza para la Investigación de Enfermedades Emergentes (AIE).

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