



## Launch of International Phytomedicines and Medical Cannabis Institute (IPI) at Harvard during the 2019 Global Health Catalyst summit

Boston, Mass. (May 26<sup>st</sup>, 2019) – One major outcome of the 2019 Global Health Catalyst summit at Harvard Medical School was the launching of an international phytomedicines institute focused on developing evidence-based phytomedicines for global health and economic development.

According to the World Health Organization, up to 80% of the populations in the world use medicinal plants as remedies. Recently, over 33 USA states, and a growing number of countries have legalized medical cannabis. The National Institutes of Health, and World Health Organization encourage research on medical cannabis for treating cancer, the side effects of radiotherapy or chemotherapy and treatment of other diseases including pain, neurological disorders and so forth. Besides Cannabis, it is estimated that of the 300,000 plant species that exist in the world, only 15% have been evaluated to determine their pharmacological potential.

Speaking during the launch of the IPI, Dr Wilfred Ngwa (Director of the Harvard Global Health Catalyst) highlighted the focus of the IPI to Research and on developing Evidence-based phytomedicines for global health and economic development. The mission of the IPI is to Leverage the best science, technology and education from Harvard and partner institutions to convert potential high impact medicinal plants to evidence-based pharmaceutical grade products for global health and economic development.

The Harvards IPI will leverage new seed-funding from the Brigham and Women's Hospital and Dana-Farber Cancer Institute with additional funding through sponsored research agreements and commitments from a growing number of industry partners looking to accelerate research in this area. The IPI follows the model of the National Science Foundation International Materials Institutes (IMI) with other partner academic institutions and industry partners. Industry partners with either sponsored research agreements or commitments include:

- ♣ Flavocure Biotech Inc
- ♣ Atlas Biotechnologies
- ♣ Cannabis Science Inc
- ♣ Locker Room Consulting-Nestre-Primitive (LNP) consortium

Key pytomedicines highlighted during the launching included Medical Cannabis and isolated products from Justicia with major potential for treatment of blood disorders. Speaking during the launching ceremony, the Honorable Audley Shaw, Jamaica's Minister of Industry, Agriculture, Commerce anf Fisheries applauded the new initiative. "I am excited about the launch of the IPI to dramatically increase access to evidence-based medicinal products from plants.", said Dr Wilfred Ngwa, Director of the Harvard Global Health Catalyst.

Other key participants at the launch included NFL great and future Hall of Famer, Calvin Johnson and his partners former NFL players Rob Sims and Jason Strayhorn, who are founders of Locker Room Consulting and Primitive, with commitment to collaborating with the Harvard Global Health Catalyst in phytomedicines. Also present where Ambassadors and other government officials from different countries.

Summit Website: [www.globalhealthcatalystsummit.org](http://www.globalhealthcatalystsummit.org)

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