



## News Release

RTI International  
Office of Communications  
3040 Cornwallis Road • PO Box 12194  
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709-2194  
USA  
Phone 919-541-6000  
Fax 919-541-5985 • [www.rti.org](http://www.rti.org)

Media Contacts:  
**Lisa Bistreich**  
[lbistreich@rti.org](mailto:lbistreich@rti.org)  
Phone 919-316-3596

**Patrick Gibbons**  
[pgibbons@rti.org](mailto:pgibbons@rti.org)  
Phone 919-541-6136

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# RTI International Launches Initiative to Enhance Diffusion of Emerging Health Technologies to Developing Nations

RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK, N.C. (Jan. 31, 2008) – RTI International has received a three-year, \$3 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to support a new initiative for global health investment in collaboration with Commons Capital, a Boston-based socially responsible venture capital firm.

RTI will provide technical and business assistance for Commons Capital's portfolio companies to encourage them to develop devices, diagnostics, and information technology solutions appropriately tailored for underserved markets in developing countries.

"This initiative, funded by the Gates Foundation, will stimulate global health innovation and investment by the private sector," said Doris Rouse, Ph.D., project director at RTI. "Using this model, RTI will form partnerships to bring new resources and technologies to address critical health needs in developing nations."

The unique technical and business assistance needs for global health product and market development require specialized expertise beyond that needed for developing products focused on industrialized markets.

RTI will apply its expertise in international development and technology commercialization to develop and implement sustainable global health business strategies that address these unique needs, ensuring that lifesaving products are made affordable and accessible in resource-limited countries. Working closely with Commons Capital and its portfolio companies, RTI will

- Define product characteristics
- Assess market demand and prepare regulatory strategies for target markets
- Assess economic and health impact of technology
- Identify strategic partners for product development and commercialization
- Map sales and distribution channels

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RTI and Commons Capital will explore new business models and financing mechanisms for global health product development and commercialization. Through this non-profit initiative known as Venture Investment Technical Assistance (VITA), RTI will provide technical and business assistance to companies while Commons Capital develops new strategies for global health investment based on traditional and social venture capital principles. "We believe that venture capital offers a proven engine for innovation that can be used to help solve major global health problems," said Elizabeth Bailey, a principal at Commons Capital. "Very little has been done to harness the venture capital model for the benefit of health care in the developing world, and we're excited to be pioneering this new effort alongside RTI."

VITA will focus first on working with one of Commons Capital's existing portfolio companies -- Claros Diagnostics, a "point-of-care diagnostics" company committed to developing products for the global health marketplace.

"While the focus of our efforts is currently in the area of cancer diagnostics, we recognize the potential to extrapolate into several other fields, one of which includes a multiplexed format for infectious disease with direct application to the developing world," said Michael J. Magliochetti, Ph.D., president and CEO of Claros Diagnostics. "We're excited to be working with RTI and Commons Capital to develop a viable business strategy for Claros to serve this market."

The law firm of Sidley Austin LLP will provide pro bono legal work for the project, and RTI will also partner with JSI Research and Training Institute, a global leader in the area of supply chain management for essential health products.

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### **About Commons Capital**

Commons Capital is a socially responsible venture capital firm that invests in for-profit companies that promise strong financial and social/environmental returns. The firm has 18 investments across four industries: health care, education, clean energy and environment. Most recently, Commons Capital made investments in two companies with platform technologies appropriate for global health applications -- Claros Diagnostics (point-of-care diagnostics) and Combinent Biomedical Systems (women's health drug delivery).

### **About Sidley Austin**

Sidley Austin LLP is one of the world's largest full-service law firms, with more than 1,800 lawyers practicing in 16 U.S. and international cities including Beijing, Brussels, Frankfurt, Geneva, Hong Kong, London, Shanghai, Singapore, Sydney and Tokyo. Every year since 2003, Sidley has been named to *Legal Business'* Global Elite, their designation for "the 15 finest law firms in the world." Sidley was again named the number one law firm for overall client service by BTI, a Boston-based consulting and research firm, in 2007. BTI has also named Sidley to their Client Service Hall of Fame as one of only two law firms to rank in the Client Service Top 10 for six years in a row.