NEWS RELEASE

Oxford-Harrington Rare Disease Centre Appoints Influential UK Leader in Health Innovation Policy, Baroness Nicola Blackwood, to its Advisory Council

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OXFORD, UK and CLEVELAND, Ohio, US, 11th September 2024 – The Oxford-Harrington Rare Disease Centre ('OHC'), a partnership between the University of Oxford, UK and Harrington Discovery Institute at University Hospitals, Cleveland, Ohio, aimed at driving cutting-edge rare disease breakthroughs, announces the appointment of Baroness Nicola Blackwood to the OHC Advisory Council. In her position on OHC's Advisory Council, Baroness Blackwood will contribute to advancing OHC's mission to drive life-changing discoveries in rare disease, with a particular focus on addressing critical unmet needs in the UK.

Baroness Blackwood is Chair of both Genomics England and Oxford University Innovation. She is also a Board Member of the biotechnology company BioNTech and investment fund RTW Biotech Opportunities. She brings extensive experience in healthcare policy and innovation, including her involvement in the UK's impactful 100,000 Genomes Project, which continues to shape the lives of those with rare diseases. She has also led on NHS innovation, UK rare disease and regulation, and global health security through her previous roles as Minister in the UK Government's Department for Health and Social Care. Her extensive professional experience combined with her own personal journey since being diagnosed with Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome will bring a unique perspective to OHC's Advisory Council.

Professor Sir John Bell, President of the Ellison Institute of Technology (EIT) Oxford, member of the OHC Steering Committee and Chair of the OHC Advisory Council, said: "We are delighted to welcome Nicola to the OHC Advisory Council. Nicola's extensive experience in healthcare policy and her dedication to advancing medical innovation makes her the perfect fit for our mission. We look forward to working with her to transform cutting-edge science

into life-changing therapies for those in need."

Baroness Nicola Blackwood commented: "Having dedicated my career to improving healthcare outcomes for patients with rare diseases, I am honoured to be joining OHC's Advisory Council. From both a professional and personal perspective, I have witnessed how much diagnosis and treatment of a rare disease can change someone's life. I am delighted to be joining OHC at this pivotal stage as they continue to progress towards driving meaningful change by developing innovative solutions for patients in need."

Matthew Wood, Director and Chief Scientific Officer of the OHC, and Professor of Neuroscience in Oxford's Department of Paediatrics, added: "Nicola's dedication to UK life sciences and the rare disease community is truly inspiring, and her advocacy efforts have significantly advanced healthcare in this area. Her contribution to shaping healthcare policy and her unwavering commitment to patients makes her a vital asset in achieving our objectives. We are all thrilled that Nicola has decided to join us at the OHC, and I look forward to collaborating with her to reach our goal of delivering 40 rare disease drugs in the next ten years."

The OHC Advisory Council includes the following founding members: Lord David Cameron, John Crowley, Professor Sir John Bell, Jonathan Stamler, MD, and Ronald G. Harrington.

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Notes to Editors

About Baroness Nicola Blackwood
Nicola is a leader in science and entrepreneurship. She is a member of the House of Lords, and Chair of Genomics England and Oxford University Innovation. She is also a Board member of the biotechnology company, BioNTech and investment fund RTW Biotech Opportunities.

Nicola served as a Minister in the UK Government Department for Health and Social Care under two Prime Ministers. As Minister for Innovation, she led on Life Sciences, NHS Data and Digital Transformation, and Global Health Security.

She was the first female Member of Parliament (MP) for Oxford and was elected by MPs of all parties to Chair the House of Commons Science and Tech Committee. She remains one of the youngest committee chairs in British history and the only woman to have chaired the Commons Science & Tech Committee.

About Rare Diseases
More than 400 million people worldwide are living with a rare disease, and approximately 50 percent are children.

There are about 7,000 known rare diseases, with new diseases being discovered every day. A rare disease affects one in 10 Americans, or 10 percent of the US population. Similarly, Europe has approximately 30 million people who suffer from a rare disease. The majority of all rare diseases are genetic in origin, which means they are present throughout a person's life. Only five percent of rare diseases have a treatment approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and similar estimates have been made for treatments approved by the European Medicine Agency (EMA). Therefore, someone with a rare disease today faces a lifelong, often life-threatening, condition with little hope for a cure, or even an effective treatment option.

About Oxford-Harrington Rare Disease Centre

The Oxford-Harrington Rare Disease Centre (OHC) is a partnership between the University of Oxford, UK and Harrington Discovery Institute at University Hospitals, in Cleveland, Ohio, US. The OHC combines world-leading strengths in research and therapeutics development from across these organizations to set the science and innovation agenda and drive cutting-edge rare disease breakthroughs to address the unmet need in rare diseases across the globe to deliver major clinical impact for patients. For more information, visit: **OxfordHarrington.org** | **X**

About the University of Oxford

The University of Oxford is rated the best in the world for medicine and life sciences, and it is home to the UK's top-ranked medical school. It has one of the largest clinical trial portfolios in the UK and great expertise in taking discoveries from the lab into the clinic. Partnerships with the local NHS Trusts enable patients to benefit from close links between medical research and healthcare delivery. The University of Oxford's Medical Sciences Division is one of the largest biomedical research centres in Europe, with over 2,500 people involved in research and more than 2,800 students. For more information, visit: **www.ox.ac.uk**

About Harrington Discovery Institute

The Harrington Discovery Institute at University Hospitals in Cleveland, Ohio – part of The Harrington Project for Discovery & Development – is a translational accelerator that advances promising discoveries from academic labs into the clinic for the benefit of patients and society. The institute was created in 2012 with a $50 million founding gift from the Harrington family and is a prime example of the commitment they share with University Hospitals to a Vision for a 'Better World'. For more information, visit: **HarringtonDiscovery.org**| **LinkedIn** | **X**

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