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# SPINAL MUSCULAR ATROPHY FOUNDATION

## Neuroscience and Industry Leaders Join Nonprofit to Battle Leading Genetic Killer of Babies

*The Spinal Muscular Atrophy Foundation Announces Two New  
Scientific Advisory Board Members*

**New York, NY – June 24, 2004** – The Spinal Muscular Atrophy Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to finding a treatment and potential cure for spinal muscular atrophy (SMA), the leading genetic killer of infants and toddlers, announces that two new members have joined its Scientific Advisory Board today. The new members are **Geoffrey Duyk, M.D., Ph.D.**, Managing Director of TPG Ventures and **Gerald Fischbach, M.D.**, Executive Vice President and Dean of the Faculty of Columbia University Medical Center.

“We are honored to have such an experienced and diverse group of people join us in our work to develop treatments for spinal muscular atrophy,” said Loren Eng, SMA Foundation’s co-founder and president. “The addition of the new advisors, drawn from Industry and Academia will expand upon the expertise of our existing Scientific Advisory Board members, who are leaders in spinal muscular atrophy research.”

Geoffrey Duyk, M.D., Ph.D., is Managing Director of Life Sciences at TPG Ventures. Prior to joining TPG Ventures in 2004, he served on the Board of Directors and was President of Research and Development at Exelixis where he led a 550+ person group focused on the discovery and development of small molecule therapeutics. Prior to Exelixis, he was one of the founding scientific staff at Millennium Pharmaceuticals. Previous to that, Dr. Duyk was an Assistant Professor at Harvard Medical School (HMS) in the Department of Genetics and Assistant Investigator of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI). While at HMS, he was a Co-Principal Investigator in the National Institutes of Health (NIH) funded Cooperative Human Linkage Center. Dr. Duyk has been and continues to be a member of numerous NIH panels and oversight committees focused on the planning and execution of the human genome project. Dr. Duyk received his doctorate in biochemistry and medical degree from Case Western Reserve University and completed his medical and fellowship training at the University of California, San Francisco.

Gerald Fischbach, M.D., is Executive Vice President for Health and Biomedical Sciences, Dean of the Faculties of Health Sciences and Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University. Dr. Fischbach received his medical degree from Cornell University Medical School in New York and interned at the University of Washington Hospital in Seattle, Washington. Throughout his career as a scientist and mentor, Dr. Fischbach has studied the formation and maintenance of synapses, the junctions between nerve cells and their targets through which information is transferred and has trained a remarkable cadre of neuroscientists.

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Dr. Fischbach served as Director of the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, National Institutes of Health from 1998 to 2001. He is a past-President of the Society for Neuroscience and now serves on several medical and scientific advisory boards. He is a member of the National Academy of Sciences, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Institute of Medicine and he is a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and a non-resident Fellow of the Salk Institute.

### **About Spinal Muscular Atrophy**

Spinal muscular atrophy is a genetic, motor neuron disease characterized by the wasting of skeletal muscles. Caused by progressive degeneration of nerve cells in the spinal cord, the disease leads to increasing muscular weakness and atrophy. Over time, its victims continue to lose muscle control and strength, leading to progressive inability to walk, stand, sit up and eventually move. More than 50% of patients with SMA die before the age of two.

### **About the SMA Foundation**

The SMA Foundation is a nonprofit organization founded in 2003 dedicated to finding a treatment and potential cure for Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) through funding the implementation and advancement of clinical research into the disease. In addition, the Foundation is committed to raising awareness, education and increased federal funding and support. For more information on the Spinal Muscular Atrophy Foundation, visit [www.smafoundation.org](http://www.smafoundation.org) or call (646) 253-7100.

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