U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services Selects Biobot to Establish a National Wastewater-based Disease Monitoring Program

Cambridge, MA. – MAY 25, 2021 – The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services has selected Biobot Analytics to establish a national disease surveillance program, leveraging wastewater epidemiology. In a twelve-week program, HHS will fund the collection and analysis of samples from 320 wastewater treatment plants, covering 100 million people across 50 states and territories, to gather data on the presence of COVID-19. This is a significant expansion to a previous HHS-led wastewater epidemiology program, and will include genomic sequencing to detect COVID-19 variants.

"With this contract, hundreds of local communities across the country will be able to leverage data from wastewater to stay on top of COVID-19, especially as we move into later stages of the pandemic and clinical testing ramps down," said Newsha Ghaeli, President & Cofounder of Biobot. "The inclusion of genomic sequencing will help monitor COVID-19 variants as they evolve to measure the effectiveness of vaccination programs and other public health initiatives." Ghaeli is an architect and engineer with expertise in the development of novel urban technologies.

Founded in 2017, Biobot is a spin-off from an MIT research project. The company's vision is that wastewater epidemiology becomes a permanent part of our sewage infrastructure and urban fabric, and that data from sewage is continuously used to inform more inclusive and proactive public health decision-making.

"Wastewater-based biosurveillance is a crucial tool to prevent future pandemics. Beyond COVID-19, this technology can be expanded to monitor seasonal influenza outbreaks, and proactively detect novel viral pathogens and antibiotic resistance. We are excited to share this vision with HHS and partner to scale a solution to keep our country safe," said Dr. Mariana Matus, CEO & Cofounder of Biobot. Dr. Matus is a computational biologist who specialized in wastewater epidemiology during her doctoral studies at MIT.

Participation in the HHS program is limited, and testing begins soon. Interested organizations can register using this link.

About Biobot Analytics

Biobot is a spin-off from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and is headquartered in Cambridge, MA. Since the start of the pandemic, Biobot has worked with over 400 communities across the United States and Canada to map concentrations of the novel coronavirus. More information on our mission and technology is available on our website, www.biobot.io.