Pitt announces new director of its Center for Vaccine Research

SUZANNE ELLIOTT  |  Wednesday, March 28, 2018, 11:42 a.m.

The University of Pittsburgh's Center for Vaccine Research has tabbed W. Paul Duprex as its new director following a two-year search.

“Dr. Duprex has a deep passion for not only understanding infectious diseases, but also for transforming that knowledge into practical developments, such as vaccines, that will protect public health,” Arthur Levine, senior vice chancellor of the health sciences and John and Gertrude Petersen Dean of Medicine at Pitt, said in a release. “Under his leadership, the vaccine development legacy that Pitt began with Dr. Jonas Salk will continue to thrive and make Pittsburgh proud.”

Duprex comes to Pitt from Boston University’s School of Medicine, where he was a professor of microbiology and director of bioimaging at the university's National Emerging Infectious Diseases Laboratories.

Duprex, who will hold Pitt’s Jonas Salk Chair for Vaccine Research, will also direct the Regional Biocontainment Laboratory, a high-security facility at the center that allows scientists to contain and study dangerous pathogens.

“The vast majority of vaccines are still given by injection, but Pitt has exciting, ongoing research to change that and deliver them in ways that don’t involve large needles,” Duprex said. “This offers tremendous opportunities to develop temperature-stable vaccines, something that motivates me greatly since this could have a major impact on delivery in the developing world.”

He replaces Saleem Khan, a Pitt professor of microbiology and molecular genetics, who was serving as interim director.

Duprex earned a Ph.D. in molecular virology from Queen's University Belfast in the United Kingdom, following research in biocontainment on foot-and-mouth disease virus at The Pirbright Institute.

Suzanne Elliott is a Tribune-Review staff writer. She can be reached at 412-871-2346, selliott@tribweb.com (mailto:selliott@tribweb.com) or via Twitter @415Suzanne (https://twitter.com/415Suzanne).