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Methanol Institute & Hanoi Medical University Launch Program to Protect Consumers

Hanoi -- The Methanol Institute (“MI”), the global trade association for the methanol industry, and the Institute for Preventative Medicine & Public Health at Hanoi Medical University (IPMPH-HMU), announced today the launch of a joint pilot program and campaign to protect Vietnamese consumers from health effects caused by improperly brewed, homemade alcohol and methanol-laced alcoholic beverages.

Improperly brewed homemade spirits, methanol-laced counterfeit beverages, and legitimately-produced spirits adulterated with methanol are seen as the three biggest factors in many preventative and tragic cases of poisoning. These incidents unfortunately have had serious consequences leading to injury and loss of life. They are largely preventable with proper enforcement and consumer education.

MI and IPMPH, in partnership with Bach Mai Hospital’s Poison Control Center and The LIAM Charitable Fund (<https://www.facebook.com/Lifesaving-Initiatives-About-Methanol-LIAM-389335401165731>), are developing five-year **Vietnam Methanol Education Programs (VMEP)** from 2016-2020. MI and IPMPH’s vision is to create sustainable programs beyond 2020 which are managed locally and funded through supporting partners in Vietnam and globally.

The VMEP will encompass training of medical personnel and public healthcare workers in community, regional, and municipal hospitals. The programs will also provide educational outreach to the Vietnamese public, including at-risk communities. The programs will also highlight the serious risks of methanol poisoning associated with traditional and homemade alcohol production.

MI and LIAM developed and continue to run successfully similar programs in Indonesia since 2014. The program has saved numerous lives in Indonesia, and in 2015 trained more than 2,000 people in at-risk communities, medical personnel, and public health workers.

MI and IPMPH are currently conducting an extensive research study in Phu Tho Province. This will provide greater clarity on the causes of methanol poisoning in the province due to improperly brewed, homemade alcohol. Both organizations will then develop a pilot VMEP model in Phu Tho this year; they plan to expand it to other provinces and cities (and nationwide) between 2017 and 2020.

Associate Professor Nguyen Duc Hinh, Rector of Hanoi Medical University, commented, “HMU and IPMPH are very pleased to collaborate with MI, PCC, LIAM, and other partners on this important project. We believe it will provide critical training and education to our communities and to the medical teams which work tirelessly to provide them with the best healthcare services.”

John Livorness, Chairman of MI’s Product Stewardship Committee and Senior Manager, Methanol Business, Oxygenates Business Unit (Chemical) for SABIC Asia Pacific: “Product stewardship is a cornerstone of the methanol industry. The Methanol Institute and its members contribute significant resources to ensuring methanol is used safely and responsibly around the world. MI is pleased to be working with IPMPH and our other Vietnamese partners and with LIAM. Based on the success of this program in Indonesia with LIAM, MI has a solid foundation on which we can

build a successful program in Vietnam – one that we are confident will save many lives in the years to come.”

Methanol is one of the most widely-used chemical commodities in the world. It is also being used safely and increasingly in a number of energy applications ranging from transportation fuel for vehicles and marine vessels, to fuel cells, industrial power applications, and as a cooking fuel source. Also known as “wood alcohol,” methanol is made from natural gas, coal, and biomass, with global demand of nearly 80 million metric tons (100 billion liters) annually.

For more information on methanol poisoning and treatment, please visit the Health and Safety section of MI’s website (www.methanol.org) and IPMPH’s website at <http://ipmph.edu.vn/>.

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About the Methanol Institute

The Methanol Institute (MI) serves as the global trade association for one of the world’s most vibrant and innovative industries. Founded in 1989, MI represents methanol producers, distributors, and technology providers in every corner of the globe – from our headquarters in Singapore and regional offices in Washington, D.C., Brussels, and Beijing. More information is available at www.methanol.org.

About HMU and IPMPH

Hanoi Medical University (HMU) was established in 1902 and is one of Vietnam’s leading universities, as well as a leading medical education institution among the country’s eight medical universities. For many years, HMU has been a focal point for networking and disseminating innovations in medical education and medical research. Since 1945, HMU has trained about 18,000 doctors for the healthcare system and about 10,000 post-graduate students, who have played important roles in the health care system.

The Institute for Preventive Medicine and Public Health (IPMPH) is the largest academic unit within HMU, and has had over 50 years of experience in training and research on preventive medicine and public health. Over the past 20 -- with support from the Swedish and Dutch governments and academic institutions -- HMU and IPMPH faculty have built extensive expertise in health system research, and public health research and evaluation. Faculty members have been working closely with The United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) implementers such as FHI and Abt Associates in implementing teaching, evaluation and research activities.

About The LIAM Charitable Fund

Lifesaving Initiatives About Methanol (The LIAM Charitable Fund) was founded by Tim and Lhani Davies following the death of their son Liam in the Gili Islands, Indonesia in January 2013 as a result of methanol poisoning from adulterated alcoholic beverages.

The Charity’s main objectives are the development of methanol-related educational, training, and awareness initiatives within local Indonesian communities, tourism sector, and the healthcare system. LIAM is providing extensive advisory support to assist MI and IPMPH in developing the VMEP in Vietnam.

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