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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Alere Wellbeing and University of Washington Host First Annual International Quitline Institute to Train Global Leaders on Best Practices for Tobacco Quitline Operations**

**SEATTLE, Wash. December 28, 2011** - Alere Wellbeing (formerly Free & Clear), the world's largest provider of tobacco quitline services, announced today the success of the first annual International Quitline Institute (IQI) held in Seattle October 9-14, 2011. The event brought 26 attendees from 16 countries representing all six World Health Organization regions.

The IQI was a collaborative effort on the part of Alere Wellbeing and the University of Washington along with the American Cancer Society®, National Cancer Institute, World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control Foundation, and Pfizer Medical Education Group. Its purpose was to educate all nations, including resource-poor countries that have experienced a sharp increase in the number of premature deaths resulting from tobacco use, about best practices for reaching tobacco users and providing them with the most effective services to help them quit.

"It is estimated that, by 2050, between 16 and 20 million people around the world will die prematurely each year if nothing is done to help tobacco users quit," says Ken Wassum, Alere Wellbeing's Associate Director, Clinical Development and Support. "It was inspiring to watch these talented and committed individuals from all around the world work towards a single goal – to help tobacco users quit."

All 174 nations who have signed and ratified the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control are required to offer evidence-based treatment to tobacco users. According to Article 14 of the treaty, quitline services are recognized as an effective method of tobacco cessation treatment and signatories are encouraged to develop quitlines to augment healthcare systems and provider-delivered interventions.

IQI faculty included internationally recognized tobacco treatment experts from the World Health Organization, American Cancer Society, Centers for Disease Control, National Cancer Institute, University of Washington, and Harvard Medical School.

Training and workshops featured topics related to the global tobacco epidemic and tobacco control efforts, but primarily focused on how to create and implement a tobacco quitline. Topics included operational considerations such as technology, staffing, and training, as well as treatment-related issues like counseling and quit medications. The training ended with a day devoted to funding, budgeting, and promotional strategies, and attendees left with a detailed action plan for how to improve their existing quitlines or create new quitlines in their respective states, provinces, and countries. "The impossible is possible," said Tatyana El-Kour of the World Health Organization, Jordan, after touring the Alere Wellbeing office, where tobacco treatment specialists provide services to more than 50 percent of the quitlines in the United States.

The next IQI training event will take place in Singapore at the World Conference on Tobacco or Health. A pre-conference workshop, "Optimizing the impact of tobacco quitlines: Integration with tobacco control policies and treatment guidelines," will be held on March 20, 2012 from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm. Those interested in attending can register here: <http://wctoh2012.org/nav-preconfprogramme.html>

For more information about the IQI, please visit <http://internationalquitlineinstitute.com/>

#### About Alere Wellbeing

Alere Wellbeing brings together science, technology, and personal interaction to help people recognize and modify unhealthy behaviors to avoid chronic illness and live longer, more vital lives. Alere Wellbeing's evidence-based programs address modifiable health risks that contribute to chronic disease: tobacco use, poor nutrition, physical inactivity, and stress. Current clients include 27 state governments and more than 650 health plans and employers, 63 of which are in the Fortune 500. Alere Wellbeing is known and respected for its pay-for-performance business model, intense focus on scalable service quality, dedicated account management, continuous program improvement, and transparent reporting of measurable outcomes at the individual participant and aggregate population level. Alere Wellbeing has contributed to more than 100 published research studies and maintains collaboration with the American Cancer Society® and an active research program funded by the Centers for Disease Control, American Legacy Foundation, and the National Institutes of Health. More information about Alere Wellbeing can be found at [www.alerewellbeing.com](http://www.alerewellbeing.com).

#### About Alere

By developing new capabilities in near-patient diagnosis, monitoring and health management, Alere enables individuals to take charge of improving their health and quality of life at home. Alere's global leading products and services, as well as its new product development efforts, focus on cardiology, women's health, infectious disease, oncology and toxicology. Alere is headquartered in Waltham, Massachusetts. For more information regarding Alere please visit <http://www.alere.com>.

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