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Pharma Exec Trevor Mundel Named President of Gates Foundation Global Health Initiative

by Michael Price on 13 September 2011, 2:13 PM | [0 Comments](#)

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The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation announced today that Trevor Mundel, who currently heads the development team of pharmaceutical giant Novartis International AG, will take over as president of the its Global Health Program on 1 December. Mundel, a physician and pharmaceutical scientist, will replace Tachi Yamada, who retired as president of the program in June.

The program, which draws from the Gates Foundation's \$36.3 billion endowment, funds research, development, and implementation projects to fight diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, malnutrition, polio, and tuberculosis in poor countries. To date, the program has awarded \$14.7 billion in grants, including funds to efforts to [understand the malnutrition disease kwashiorkor](#) and [develop potential anti-HIV treatments](#).

Several pharmaceutical firms, including Alkermes Inc., Parke-Davis, Pfizer, and Novartis, have brought in Mundel to shake up their research and development programs and streamline the process of translating basic research into new drugs. Mundel is a big proponent of "modeling and simulation," [according to a 2009 article in Bio-IT World](#), using complex mathematical models to optimize and expedite everything from biochemical drug mechanisms to decision-making and profits.

Mundel's appointment likely reflects the Gates Foundation's desire to apply that approach to their health and drug development projects, says Denise DeMan-Williams, founder and CEO of the biotech recruiting firm Bench

International (who recruited Mundel for the Novartis job). "Trevor is a person who is probably several years ahead of his time," she says. "I think he'll do impeccably well."

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