

Penny M. Heaton, M.D.
Chief Executive Officer
The Bill & Melinda Gates Medical Research Institute

Dr. Penny Heaton is the Chief Executive Officer of the recently announced Bill & Melinda Gates Medical Research Institute (Gates MRI), a non-profit medical research institute that aims to accelerate translational science to combat diseases that disproportionately impact the poor in low- and middle-income countries.

Dr. Heaton will lead the institute's work to capitalize on new strategies that could increase the identification, selection, and optimization of novel candidates for drugs, vaccines, monoclonal antibodies, and diagnostics to eradicate malaria, accelerate the end of the TB epidemic and prevent diarrheal deaths from occurring in children.

Prior to this role, Dr. Heaton served as director of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Vaccine Development and Surveillance team, where she led the foundation's vaccine development program against several diseases including HIV, tuberculosis, malaria, pneumonia, enteric diseases, and polio. She has more than 15 years of experience leading vaccine clinical research and development for companies like Novartis, Merck and Novovax.

Dr. Heaton began her career at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention conducting diarrheal disease surveillance and investigating outbreaks of foodborne and diarrheal diseases, influencing her life-long passion for vaccine development. Notably, Dr. Heaton co-developed RotaTeq® during her time at Merck & Co., a rotavirus vaccine which has been licensed in more than 100 countries and universally recommended by the World Health Organization for infants worldwide.

A graduate of the University of Louisville School of Medicine in Kentucky, Dr. Heaton is board-certified in Pediatrics and Pediatric Infectious Diseases. She is a member of the Pediatric Infectious Diseases Society and a fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics.