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CHRB NEWS RELEASE

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DR. ARTHUR NAMED EQUINE MEDICAL DIRECTOR

SACRAMENTO, CA – Dr. Rick Arthur, a world-renown expert in the field of veterinary medicine, has been named equine medical director for the California Horse Racing Board and will advise the Board on all matters relating to equine health and welfare and drug testing.

A joint committee of the CHRB and the School of Veterinary Medicine at the University of California at Davis selected Dr. Arthur from among six highly qualified candidates. Dr. Arthur, who has practiced veterinary medicine on the Southern California thoroughbred circuit for the last 30 years, will give up his private practice in order to accept the position, which has the approval of the UC regents.

“Rick brings an exceptional level of medical and practical experience to this position,” said CHRB Chairman Richard B. Shapiro. “We are very fortunate to have someone of his caliber join our team. The CHRB is committed to having the best educational, testing, and diagnostic program in the country. Between Dr. Arthur and the Maddy Laboratory at UC Davis, we are well on our way to accomplishing our goals.

“Rick will operate in his area of expertise with much greater authority than any prior holder of this position. I view Rick not only as an exceptional veterinarian, but an expert on the business of horse racing. His input and direction will be heavily relied upon in all medication and equine matters that come before our Board. My vision for the CHRB is to have experts advising us in each area that we deal with in order to ensure that we are making appropriate and intelligent decisions. Rick is extremely knowledgeable about racing medications, rules, and backside procedures, and he is respected throughout the world.”

“ Dr. Arthur brings a diverse range of expertise and interest to this position,” said Dr. John Pascoe, executive associate dean of the School of Veterinary Medicine at UC Davis. “Rick has been an advocate for equine health and welfare in racing for more than 20 years. Rick, along with the late Senator Ken Maddy and Professor Dennis Meagher, an equine surgeon from UC Davis, was influential in establishing the concept of a strong relationship between the racing industry, the CHRB, and the University. This permitted the intellectual resources at the University to be harnessed for the betterment of horses and racing.

“The key elements of this program – the equine drug testing and necropsy programs – have contributed substantially to racing welfare, enhanced drug-testing techniques, improved understanding of racing injuries, and resulted in changes in track safety. California’s approach is regarded as the model program internationally. Racing is very much in the public spotlight, and Dr. Arthur and the CHRB have some substantial challenges ahead. We look forward to Dr. Arthur’s leadership and are encouraged that the CHRB supports an expanded rule for the EMD as originally envisioned.”

While the equine medical director always has enjoyed considerable influence with the Board in establishing policies and procedures for equine health and welfare, drug testing, medication rules, classifications, and penalty guidelines, Dr. Arthur is expected to play an even stronger role under the new “team approach” endorsed by Chairman Shapiro and Ingrid

Fermin, who became CHRB executive director early last year.

“One of my goals has been to put together a knowledgeable, specialized team to effectively regulate the state’s horse-racing industry,” explained Fermin. “It was always my intention to delegate authority to individuals with specialized knowledge in their areas of expertise.

“Roy Minami (CHRB assistant executive director) is our expert on budgetary matters and the effective operation of the Board. Frank Moore, our chief investigator, oversees the supervising investigators and their investigative staff, who monitor our stable areas and ensure compliance with CHRB regulations and the Horse Racing Law. And we are in the process of adding additional expertise to our team from the horse-racing and legal communities to create an extensive continuing education program for our stewards and investigators.

“Dr. Arthur is the newest member of that team. He is the most qualified individual I know to handle some of the most critical responsibilities of the Board relating to the health and safety of racehorses, effective drug testing, and maintaining a level playing field for fans and racing participants.”

Dr. Arthur said the philosophies expressed by Fermin, Chairman Shapiro, and other racing commissioners greatly influenced his decision to give up private practice and take the EMD position that he had a hand in creating.

“I served on a Blue Ribbon Committee that was formed in the late ’80s to evaluate why California was having so many problems with drug testing,” said Dr. Arthur. “We determined that an obvious source of many of our problems was the lack of professional, technically competent personnel within the CHRB to evaluate medication issues and drug-testing findings. One of the core recommendations of the committee was the creation of the position of equine medical director. The purpose was to provide the CHRB with technical and professional expertise, and hopefully some common sense, to fix a system that wasn’t working. The CHRB needed someone who understood drugs and medications, understood drug testing, and understood veterinary and animal welfare issues.

“The equine medical director never has been used in the manner envisioned by the Blue Ribbon Committee – primarily because, until now, the executive staff of the CHRB never has fully bought into the concept. For an EMD to be effective, the CHRB’s executive director must relinquish some control. The current CHRB commissioners and executive director, Ingrid Fermin, understand the need for an active equine medical director, and they are willing to delegate the appropriate responsibility. I agreed to accept the position with the understanding the equine medical director would have the authority and jurisdiction to do the job properly.

Discussing his duties and goals, Dr. Arthur explained, “Even though I will be based in Southern California, I will be spending considerable time at the Maddy Laboratory and Veterinary School at UC Davis investigating problems we need to solve. I will be actively involved in developing drug testing policy, analyzing laboratory findings, and assisting the CHRB in developing its cases. One of my requirements to accept this position was that the equine medical director be given a research budget to investigate matters important for drug testing and horse health.

“Most drug positives today, about 80 percent by most estimates, are inadvertent mistakes with no attempt to alter the outcome of a race. That means we potentially could reduce our drug positives by up to 80 percent. We need to develop a program where people understand the rules. Fairness is the key in having horsemen abide by and respect the rules. Everyone needs to know what is allowed and what is prohibited. The CHRB would be able to concentrate on more significant problems rather than spending time and money pursuing what in reality are minor violations with no intention to affect the outcome of a race.

“Our goal must be to make the Maddy Laboratory the premier laboratory and California the premier racing jurisdiction in the country. They probably are already. As a second step, I want the Maddy Lab and California to be the best in the world. If the State of California gives us the financial support we need, we can accomplish these goals. We already have the most sophisticated drug-testing system in the country.”

Dr. Arthur will have two broad areas of responsibility. One is to protect the integrity of horse racing, especially

relative to the horse. This will include medication policies and the administration of those policies, the drug-testing program, and backside security. He will participate in regulatory action as needed for the CHRB to successfully ensure compliance with its regulations.

“The second broad area of responsibility, which in my opinion has not received the appropriate attention, is equine health and welfare,” said Dr. Arthur. “This includes track surface and track safety issues, the UC Davis-CHRB necropsy program, and policies and procedures to protect the health and welfare of the horse. I am going to pay very close attention to horse injuries and the racing environment. I intend to be on top of issues important to protect the health and welfare of the horse.”

Dr. Arthur has been actively involved in racehorse medication and drug-testing issues at the state, national, and international levels for many years. He has served on the CHRB’s Medication Advisory Committee since the mid-’80s. He chaired the Racing Committee of the American Association of Equine Practitioners and served on the Quality Assurance Program of the Racing Commissioners International. He serves on the Executive Committee of the RMTC. He succeeds Dr. Ron Jensen as EMD, who retired in December.

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