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Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences Breaks Ground on New State-of-the-Art Forensic Genetics Laboratory

HOUSTON, Texas (April 9, 2012)—Harris County, through a collaborative effort with the Texas Medical Center, will hold a groundbreaking ceremony for the expansion of the Regional Forensic Genetics Laboratory on Tuesday, April 10, 2012 at 2:00 PM. The ceremony will be held at The National Center for Human Performance in the Texas Medical Center located at 2450 Holcombe Boulevard, Houston, Texas 77021.

The new Regional Forensic Genetics Laboratory will move into its new home in late Fall 2012. The 16,000 square foot space located in the Texas Medical Center's John P. McGovern Building will be converted into a premier forensic genetics laboratory with state-of-the-art technology providing the laboratory staff with tools to deliver high quality forensic testing services. DNA lab staff and analysts, crime scene team, and other DNA specialists of the Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences will occupy the space.

Dr. Luis A. Sanchez, the Chief Medical Examiner for Harris County remarked, "The new state-of-the-art forensic genetics laboratory will demonstrate and affirm the importance the Institute of Forensic Sciences and Harris County Commissioners Court place on sound scientific evidence and impartiality in the pursuit of criminal justice. DNA testing has forever changed forensic science, and we are proud to proactively participate in the development and use of this increasingly essential science. The new DNA facility will enable us to expand our services to meet the growing demands for DNA testing in our community. I am confident that with the ongoing support of the County we will continue to succeed in our goal of setting new standards of excellence in this highly specialized field."

The laboratory, with its regional focus and innovative technologies, will provide far-reaching benefits in terms of evidence processing used for convictions and exonerations in criminal investigations.

Pat Lykos, Harris County District Attorney, commented, "This is a momentous occasion. The extraordinary relationship between the Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences and the Texas Medical Center will create the preeminent forensic genetics laboratory in the world—independent and worthy of the citizens of Harris County. Thanks to the foresight of the Commissioners Court, this lab will produce the best scientific evidence for the justice system and the research will advance science. The transformation of vision into the reality of cutting-edge science will solve crimes, identify dangerous predators and serial criminals, and prove guilt or innocence. Science in the service of justice."

The Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences is a long-standing member institution of the Texas Medical Center. The Regional Forensic Genetics Laboratory will provide the highest quality analytical support to Harris County Medical Examiners, Harris County Law Enforcement and community agencies. To find out more, please visit www.hctx.net/ifs

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