Leading coronavirus scientist, Kizzmekia S. Corbett, to join Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health to continue vaccine development research

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Boston, MA – Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health today announced that Kizzmekia S. Corbett will join the School as an assistant professor in the Department of Immunology and Infectious Diseases. She will also hold an appointment at the Harvard Radcliffe Institute as the Shutzer Assistant Professor. Corbett comes to Harvard Chan School following more than six years as a research fellow at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases' (NIAID) Vaccine Research Center, part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), where she was instrumental in groundbreaking research that directly led to development of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. Her first day will be June 14, 2021.

"Vaccines are the great equalizer when it comes to addressing health disparities, especially around infectious diseases. Harvard Chan School is at the forefront of advancing health equity, and I'm excited to join such distinguished colleagues in my pursuit of viral immunology research and vaccine development," said Corbett.

In her new role, Corbett will head the new Coronaviruses & Other Relevant Emerging Infectious Diseases (CoreID) Lab to study and understand the interface between hosts' immune systems and viruses that cause respiratory disease, with the goal of informing development of novel and potentially universal vaccines. "If the last year has taught me anything, it's that anything is possible," she added.

"I am delighted to welcome Kizzmekia to the School. Working in public health is a calling, and I am proud to work each day supporting an amazing team of researchers who have devoted their professional lives to helping others live full, happy, and healthy lives," said Michelle Williams, dean of the faculty at Harvard Chan School and Angelopoulos Professor in Public Health and International Development. "Kizzmekia is a natural fit here. Her success in the lab is matched only by her commitment to using science to improve people's lives, especially for communities that have too often been left behind by advances in health care."

"Kizzmekia represents the best of the public health profession and I am thrilled to welcome her to the School," said Sarah Fortune, John LaPorte Given Professor of Immunology and Infectious Diseases and chair of the Department of Immunology and Infectious Diseases at Harvard Chan School. "She brings a rigorous research agenda and a service-minded commitment to public health, which makes her a perfect fit for our department and the School."

"Kizzmekia is an inspiring scientist who—though still early in her career—has already had incredible impact. Her work is helping to reshape our world and is saving lives on a vast scale," said Harvard Radcliffe Institute Dean Tomiko Brown-Nagin, Daniel P. S. Paul Professor of Constitutional Law at Harvard Law School and professor of history in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Harvard University. "As one of a select few Radcliffe professors, Kizzmekia will join the Institute's interdisciplinary fellowship of scholars, scientists, artists, and practitioners, and I cannot wait to see what she accomplishes as a member of this uniquely generative community."

Corbett's work has earned praise from luminaries in medicine and government alike, from NIAID Director Anthony Fauci, and president of the National Medical Association Oliver Brooks, to President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris. As a young, Black female scientist, Corbett has used her national platform to address lingering vaccine hesitancy, or as she calls it, "vaccine inquisitiveness," in the Black community

and reassure skeptics of its safety and efficacy by speaking virtually at churches and other community organizations. She hopes to continue these community outreach efforts in Boston.

A native of North Carolina, Corbett, 35, spent six years as a research fellow and the scientific lead for the Coronavirus Vaccines Team at the Vaccine Research Center's Viral Pathogenesis Laboratory. In 2008, she received a BS in biological sciences, with a secondary major in sociology, from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, where she was a Robert and Jane Meyerhoff and NIH undergraduate scholar. She obtained her PhD in microbiology and immunology from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2014.

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Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health brings together dedicated experts from many disciplines to educate new generations of global health leaders and produce powerful ideas that improve the lives and health of people everywhere. As a community of leading scientists, educators, and students, we work together to take innovative ideas from the laboratory to people's lives—not only making scientific breakthroughs, but also working to change individual behaviors, public policies, and health care practices. Each year, more than 400 faculty members at Harvard Chan School teach 1,000-plus full-time students from around the world and train thousands more through online and executive education courses. Founded in 1913 as the Harvard-MIT School of Health Officers, the School is recognized as America's oldest professional training program in public health