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## Craig Venter Highlights Spring Meeting

**Alexandria, VA (May 3, 2016)** — Although thousands of human genomes have been sequenced, our knowledge of the human genome is just beginning to emerge, and we have little detailed knowledge of how changing the genetic code will affect development and the subtlety associated with the tremendous array of human traits, Dr. Craig Venter told attendees at ALDA's recent Spring Senior Executives Meeting.

The day and a half program assessed the prospects for directed evolution technologies such as Crispr-Cas9 and synthetic biology.

According to Dr. Venter, genes and proteins rarely have a single function in the genome and we know of many cases in experimental animals where changing a "known function" of a gene results in development surprises. Only a small percentage of human genes are well understood – for most, we have little or no clue as to their role.

In his presentation, Dr. Venter reviewed much of the genome research that has been conducted including the efforts of Synthetic Genomics and United Therapeutics to humanize pigs for organ transplants, and case studies undertaken by Human Longevity, Inc.

In another presentation, Dr. George Q. Daley of the Harvard Medical School examined the bioethical issues and how gene editing technologies will be regulated in their applications in human germ line genome editing.

Noting that applications in somatic gene editing are imminent and applications in embryo, gamete editing are feasible, Dr. Daley called the audience's attention to a recent guideline on stem cell science and clinical translation issued by the International Society for Stem Cell Research. While supporting laboratory-based research that entails modifying the nuclear genomes of gametes, zygotes and/or pre-implementation human embryos since it will enhance knowledge, the guideline states that until further clarity emerges on the scientific and ethical fronts, any attempt to modify the nuclear genome of human embryo for human reproduction is premature and should be prohibited.

Other speakers in the topical program portion of the meeting included Professors James J. Collins of MIT and Matthew Porteus of Stanford Medical School, and Juan Enriquez, author of "Evolving Ourselves" and a visionary on the strategic future and promise of the life sciences and genomic research.

For more information regarding ALDA, contact Mike Duff, President, at 703-647-6214. More information regarding ALDA, its purposes, objectives and programs, and links to its members' websites can be found at [www.thealda.org](http://www.thealda.org)

Based on the Washington DC suburb of Alexandria, VA, ALDA is an industry trade

association for companies that develop and supply life science, analytical and diagnostic products and services used to conduct research, drug discovery, QA/QC testing and diagnostics in a wide range of industries and applications. Major customer segments including pharmaceuticals, biotech, academic and government research, food safety and environmental testing, personalized medicine and diagnostics.

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