

Healthcare, drug development funding news

A €66.4 million loan has been provided by the European Investment Bank to Romania to fund improvements in the country's healthcare system, says *Scrip*.¹

The funding project will be implemented in 42 regions and will assist with modernising healthcare facilities and administrative support in maternity and neonatal care, primary healthcare in rural areas and emergency medical services.

In addition, Vical Incorporated has announced the receipt of a 3-year, \$US3.1 million Phase II Small Business Innovation Research Grant from the US National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH).²

The grant will partially fund the ongoing development of Vical's immunotherapeutic DNA vaccine against cytomegalovirus infections.

Xoma Ltd has also announced that it has been awarded an 18-month contract from the NIAID, worth \$US15 million, to produce three botulinum neurotoxin monoclonal antibodies designed to protect US citizens against the harmful effects of biological agents used in bioterrorism.³

1. European Bank gives 66.4 million euros healthcare loan to Romania. *Scrip* : 7, No. 3035, 9 Mar 2005.

2. Vical Incorporated. Vical Receives Grant From NIH for CMV Vaccine Development. Media Release : 10 Mar 2005. Available from: URL: <http://www.vical.com>.

3. XOMA Ltd. XOMA Awarded \$15 Million Contract from NIAID to Help Fight Bioterrorism; XOMA to Develop Three Anti-Botulinum Neurotoxin Monoclonal Antibodies. Media Release : 10 Mar 2005. Available from: URL: <http://www.xoma.com>.