



**NIH AWARDS \$1-MILLION STTR GRANT TO
AUTOIMMUNE TECHNOLOGIES AND TULANE UNIVERSITY
TO STUDY ENTRY-INHIBITING PEPTIDES AGAINST INFLUENZA**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW ORLEANS, June 19, 2006 - Autoimmune Technologies LLC, a New Orleans biomedical company, and the Tulane University School of Medicine were today awarded a Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) grant by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases of the National Institutes of Health (NIH/NIAID).

The grant, entitled "Peptide Drugs Against Influenza Virus," will provide approximately \$1 million over two years for Autoimmune and Tulane and will support the use of a new platform modeling technique to identify candidate peptides and then test the peptides for efficacy in an animal model of influenza. Also supported by the grant will be work to optimize the lead peptide for stability and solubility.

The proprietary platform technology used by Tulane and Autoimmune to design peptides works with a great many viruses that causes human and animal diseases. The technology quickly yields amino acid sequences which focus on the fusion proteins of the particular virus under study. In influenza, the fusion protein is hemagglutinin, the "H" of H3N1, H1N1 and so on. Viruses use their fusion proteins to enter the cells inside the host. Peptides made from the design sequences interfere with the mechanical operation of the fusion protein, thereby keeping the virus from entering its target cell and preventing infection from taking place.

In laboratory tests, some of these platform-designed peptides have been very highly effective at inhibiting replication of the influenza virus. If similar efficacy is found in the animal tests, then the lead peptide will become the potential active ingredient in a new flu drug.

Autoimmune is a privately held company based in New Orleans. In addition to developing its own technologies, Autoimmune has licensed several breakthrough discoveries from Tulane. For more information, please contact Michael D. Charbonnet, CEO, Autoimmune Technologies LLC, 1010 Common Street, Suite 1705, New Orleans 70112, (504) 529-9944, or visit www.autoimmune.com.

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