



**AUTOIMMUNE TECHNOLOGIES AND TULANE UNIVERSITY
ANNOUNCE AWARD OF ADDITIONAL NIH CONTRACT
TO EXPAND LASSA FEVER RESEARCH TOWARD DEVELOPMENT OF
VACCINES AND IMPROVED THERAPEUTIC AGENTS**

*New study will focus on identification of novel B-cell epitopes on Lassa virus proteins
which could result in novel agents to treat and prevent the disease*

NEW ORLEANS, February 8, 2010 - Autoimmune Technologies, LLC, a New Orleans biomedical company, and Tulane University today announced a major extension of the collaborative effort to combat viral hemorrhagic fever (VHF), an effort that will generate approximately \$900,000 in subcontract revenue for Autoimmune Technologies over the life of the new contract.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has awarded the five-year contract totaling \$15.2 million to Tulane University for the expanded study. Collaborating with Autoimmune Technologies and Tulane in this contract are Corgenix Medical Corporation, Vybion, Inc., The Scripps Research Institute, the University of California at San Diego, Boston University, the Broad Institute, Harvard University, and various partners in West Africa.

“This study will result in a fundamental understanding of the mechanisms of antibody detection and antibody mediated neutralization of Lassa virus,” said James Robinson, M.D., Professor of Pediatrics at the Tulane University School of Medicine and the principal investigator for the program. “This research has significant implications for the next generation of antibody-based therapeutics against viral hemorrhagic fevers.”

Dr. Robinson stated further, “We have assembled a very strong and diverse group of institutions to collaborate on this project. Our goal is to elucidate the role of humoral immunity in protection or pathogenesis of Lassa fever. We will derive a diverse set of monoclonal antibodies from patients infected with Lassa virus, which causes Lassa fever. These human antibodies will be evaluated for their ability to protect from the severe consequences of the disease, and could play a role in treatment or prevention of this illness in areas of West Africa where Lassa fever is common.”

This is the third major award given to Tulane for Lassa virus research. Under the original two grants, awarded in 2005 and 2009, the group developed and patented new recombinant proteins for Lassa virus and developed several viral detection products that have been deployed in Africa for clinical testing where most VHFs are endemic.

Lassa fever, a serious viral disease spread by contact with infected rodents, is estimated to infect hundreds of thousands of people per year across the countries of Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia and Nigeria in West Africa, with approximately five thousand deaths annually. In some areas of Sierra Leone, up to 16 percent of people admitted to hospitals have Lassa fever. Lassa fever is also associated with occasional epidemics, during which the case-fatality rate can reach 50 percent. Because of the high case-fatality rate, the ability to spread easily by human-to-human contact and the potential for aerosol release, Lassa is classified as a BSL-4 (bio safety level 4 agent) and is included on the NIAID Category A select agents list of potential bio-terrorism threats.

“We are extremely happy to be part of this collaboration,” said Russell Wilson, Ph.D., President and Chief Science Officer of Autoimmune Technologies. “This project will increase our understanding of the interaction of this deadly virus with the human immune system and will ultimately lead to better treatments and vaccines for Lassa fever and potentially for other hemorrhagic fever viruses as well.”

"This important research will save lives and help prevent this deadly disease. Boston University School of Medicine is pleased to be collaborating with such an esteemed group of researchers," said Thomas Geisbert, Ph.D., Associate Director of the National Emerging Infectious Diseases Laboratories Institute at Boston University.

“Vybion is delighted to use ProCode to define epitopes on viral antigens that may not be triggered by the immune system and help to define critical regions of these viruses for function, neutralization and potential vaccine development,” said Lee Henderson, Ph.D., Vybion's CEO. These epitopes will be structurally mapped by Erica Ollmann Saphire, Ph.D., of The Scripps Research Institute.

Robert Garry, Ph.D., Professor of Microbiology and Immunology at the Tulane University School of Medicine, added, “We have been very pleased with the results of our development effort over the past five years. The diagnostic products have shown to be remarkably effective in clinical settings in Africa and will have a meaningful impact on the healthcare in that part of the world, but will also fill a critical gap in bioterrorism defense. Now under the new NIH award we will move to the next level allowing us to better treat the disease, or ultimately prevent it altogether.”

Dr. Garry stated that the group intends to expand this program to address other important infectious agents - such as Ebola, Marburg and other hemorrhagic fever viruses - that kill hundreds of thousands of people and are of concern to the public health and bioterrorism preparedness communities.

About Autoimmune Technologies, LLC

Autoimmune Technologies (New Orleans) is a privately held biomedical company. It has licensed several breakthrough research discoveries from Tulane University School of Medicine and has made exciting discoveries of its own. Autoimmune is working to offer new diagnostic tests and new anti-viral therapeutics to the medical community based on this proprietary research.

About Tulane University

Tulane University (New Orleans) was founded in 1834. Tulane is one of the most highly regarded and selective research universities in the United States, and is a member of the prestigious Association of American Universities. Tulane's schools and colleges offer undergraduate, graduate and professional degrees in the liberal arts, science and engineering, architecture, business, law, social work, medicine and public health and tropical medicine.

About Corgenix Medical Corporation

Corgenix (Denver, Co.) is a leader in the development and manufacturing of specialized diagnostic kits for immunology disorders and vascular diseases. Corgenix sells over 50 diagnostic products through a global distribution network for use in clinical laboratories worldwide. In addition, the Company is active in the development of technology and products for emerging pathogens such as viral hemorrhagic fevers.

About Vybion, Inc.

Vybion (Ithaca, N.Y.) is an emerging biotechnology company with a proprietary biopharmaceutical drug pipeline and platform technology for human monoclonal antibody selection and affinity maturation. The company's contract division has developed over 150 recombinant proteins in multiple expression systems including 12 biologic drugs in various phases of clinical development.

About Boston University

Established in 1873, Boston University School of Medicine is a leading academic and research institution, with an enrollment of nearly 630 students and more than 1,100 full and part-time faculty members. It is

known for its programs in arthritis, cardiovascular disease, cancer, infectious diseases, pulmonary disease and dermatology, among others, and is one of the major biomedical research institutions in the United States. The School is affiliated with Boston Medical Center, its principal teaching hospital, and Boston Veterans Administration Medical Center. Along with Boston Medical Center and 15 community health centers, the School of Medicine is a partner in Boston HealthNet.

About the Broad Institute

The Eli and Edythe L. Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard was founded in 2003 to empower this generation of creative scientists to transform medicine with new genome-based knowledge. The Broad Institute seeks to describe all the molecular components of life and their connections; discover the molecular basis of major human diseases; develop effective new approaches to diagnostics and therapeutics; and disseminate discoveries, tools, methods, and data openly to the entire scientific community. Founded by MIT, Harvard and its affiliated hospitals, and the visionary Los Angeles philanthropists Eli and Edythe L. Broad, the Broad Institute includes faculty, professional staff, and students from throughout the MIT and Harvard biomedical research communities and beyond, with collaborations spanning over a hundred private and public institutions in more than 40 countries worldwide. For further information about the Broad Institute, go to www.broadinstitute.org.

About Harvard University

Harvard University, established in 1636, is the oldest institution of higher learning in the United States, with an enrollment of over 20,000 undergraduate and graduate students in 10 principal academic units. Harvard has about 2,100 faculty members and more than 10,000 academic appointments in affiliated teaching hospitals. Seven presidents of the United States were graduates of Harvard and 43 current and former faculty members are Nobel laureates.

About The Scripps Research Institute

The Scripps Research Institute is one of the world's largest independent, non-profit biomedical research organizations, at the forefront of basic biomedical science that seeks to comprehend the most fundamental processes of life. Scripps Research is internationally recognized for its discoveries in immunology, molecular and cellular biology, chemistry, neurosciences, autoimmune, cardiovascular, and infectious diseases, and synthetic vaccine development. Established in its current configuration in 1961, it employs approximately 3,000 scientists, postdoctoral fellows, scientific and other technicians, doctoral degree graduate students, and administrative and technical support personnel. Scripps Research is headquartered in La Jolla, California with a second campus located in Jupiter, Florida. Research at Scripps Florida focuses on basic biomedical science, drug discovery, and technology development.

About the University of California, San Diego

Since its founding in 1959, the University of California, San Diego - one of ten campuses in the world-renowned University of California system - has rapidly risen to its status as one of the nation's premier institutions for higher education and scientific exploration. Nestled along the Pacific coastline on 1,200 acres, UCSD is a powerful magnet for those seeking a fresh, next-generation approach to education, research and community service. The campus supports 20,200 undergraduate and graduate students and 19,000 employees, including 800 faculty members. The faculty numbers five Nobel Laureates and UCSD has one of the nation's highest percentages of faculty elected to the prestigious national academies.

For further information, please visit www.autoimmune.com.

Contact: Autoimmune Technologies, LLC, 1010 Common Street, Suite 1705, New Orleans, Louisiana 70112 USA, 504-529-9944. Russell B. Wilson, Ph.D., Chief Science Officer, RBW@autoimmune.com, or Michael D. Charbonnet, CEO, MDC@autoimmune.com.

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