Mirna Therapeutics and UCSF Researchers Initiate Collaboration to Explore Therapeutic Potential of microRNAs

Austin, Texas and San Francisco, California – February 3rd, 2009 – Mirna Therapeutics ("Mirna"), a wholly owned subsidiary of Asuragen, Inc. and the University of California, San Francisco announce that they have entered into a collaboration agreement to evaluate the capacity of specific microRNAs to reduce or eliminate tumors in mouse models of cancer. The collaboration will include studies of cancer-related microRNAs that were discovered at both Mirna and UCSF as well as small RNAs that will be identified in research using mouse and cell models from UCSF.

"miRNAs are exciting new therapeutic targets for cancer therapy. Our collaboration with Mirna will allow us to identify potentially novel tumor-associated miRNAs using genetically-defined cancer model systems," said Andrei Goga, M.D., Ph.,D., Assistant Professor at UCSF and Member of the UCSF Helen Diller Comprehensive Cancer Center.

"We are very excited about the potential of miRNAs as therapeutic agents and look forward to verifying that the small RNAs can be used to treat patients with cancer. Collaborating with a leading institution like UCSF will ensure rigorous testing of therapeutic miRNAs using the most advanced cancer animal models," said Matt Winkler, CEO/CSO of Mirna.

MicroRNAs are RNA molecules of 17-24 nucleotides that are encoded in the genomes of plants and animals. The small RNAs contribute to the regulation of global gene expression by affecting the translation of specific mRNAs, including those that encode oncogenes and tumors suppressors. MicroRNA expression studies at Asuragen and at other leading institutions have revealed microRNAs that are frequently expressed at reduced levels in cancer. Many of these miRNAs induce distinct cellular phenotypes and affect cancer-related processes, including proliferation, cell-cycle progression, cell viability and apoptosis. Changing the levels of these cancer-related miRNAs in cells alters the expression of multiple bona fide oncogenes and tumor suppressors, suggesting that mis-regulation of these miRNAs in cells contributes to carcinogenesis. Mirna and UCSF are currently using animal models to explore the therapeutic potential of many of these cancer-associated miRNAs.

About Mirna Therapeutics:
Mirna Therapeutics, a wholly owned subsidiary of Asuragen, Inc., is focused on the development and commercialization of microRNA (miRNA) therapeutics. It has a substantial body of pending intellectual property around miRNAs developed by its own scientists as well as in-licensed from other institutions. Mirna scientists (while at Asuragen), along with their Yale collaborators have shown that a particular miRNA, let-7, plays a fundamental role in lung cancer and that introduction of let-7 using a viral vector results in a reduction of tumor load in an animal model (Esquela-Kerscher et al. Cell Cycle, March 15, 2008). Mirna Therapeutics, founded in 2008, is located in Austin, Texas. For more information, visit www.mirnatherapeutics.com.

About Asuragen, Inc.
Asuragen is a fully integrated diagnostic company and molecular biology service provider, focused on molecular oncology and genetic diseases, with emphasis on microRNA (miRNA). Asuragen's current diagnostic product portfolio consists of Signature® Genetic Testing and Oncology Testing products as well as industry leading controls and standards engineered using its patented Armored RNA® technology. Asuragen is empowered with a high level of scientific expertise and assay development along with a well developed business infrastructure, GLP testing services and an established cGMP manufacturing facility that allows it to span the spectrum of discovery, testing, production and commercialization. Asuragen is dedicated to developing new technologies that will become cutting edge clinical products. More information is available at the Company's website: www.asuragen.com.

About UCSF
UCSF is a leading university dedicated to promoting health worldwide through advanced biomedical research, graduate-level education in the life sciences and health professions, and excellence in patient care. For further information, please visit www.ucsf.edu.

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