



Asuragen Launches Mirna Therapeutics

Asuragen launches Mirna Therapeutics to Develop and Commercialize microRNA Oncology Therapeutics

- Mirna is developing "miRNA replacement" therapies, using miRNAs as drugs to correct the down-regulation of miRNAs that occurs in many human cancers -

Austin, Texas—April 3, 2008 — Asuragen, Inc. announced today the launch of Mirna Therapeutics, a new company focused on the development and commercialization of microRNA (miRNA) therapeutics. miRNAs are naturally occurring small RNAs that regulate whole networks of genes in a coordinated manner and play key roles in a variety of biological processes. miRNA levels are substantially reduced in a wide variety of cancers and Mirna scientists have found that replacement of these down regulated miRNAs with synthetic miRNAs results in a positive therapeutic response in cell culture and animal models of cancer. In collaboration with Yale University, Mirna has pioneered the concept of "miRNA replacement therapy".

"The discovery of miRNAs represents a paradigm changing event in biology and medicine of a magnitude that only occurs once every decade or two", said Matt Winkler CEO/CSO of Asuragen. "They likely will become a major new class of drugs".

Asuragen is transferring its miRNA therapeutic intellectual property to Mirna Therapeutics and seeding the new company with \$3M in capital. Asuragen was created in early 2006 in connection with the sale of Ambion to Applied Biosystems with the goal of developing both miRNA diagnostic and therapeutic products. "Based upon Asuragen's unique miRNA biomarker discovery platform, the miRNA therapeutic program has progressed to a point where it deserves the funding and development expertise to focus solely on therapeutics," said Winkler. "Therapeutic development requires an entirely different skill set and funding strategy than diagnostics. Mirna Therapeutics will operate as an independent company with its own management team and Board of Directors."

About microRNA

Similar to siRNAs, miRNAs are approximately 21 nucleotides long and affect gene expression by interacting with messenger RNAs. Unlike siRNAs, miRNAs are encoded in the human genome and are used as natural regulators of global gene expression. More than 500 miRNAs are encoded in the human genome and comprise approximately 2% of all mammalian genes. Since each miRNA appears to regulate the expression of tens to hundreds of different genes, miRNAs can function as "master-switches", efficiently regulating and coordinating multiple cellular pathways and processes. By coordinating the expression of multiple genes, miRNAs are responsible for guiding proper embryonic development, immunity, inflammation, as well as cellular growth and proliferation. Mis-regulation of miRNAs appears to play a fundamental role in many cancers and replacement of down regulated miRNAs in tumor cells results in a positive therapeutic response.

About Mirna Therapeutics

Mirna Therapeutics is a biotechnology company 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). The Company, founded in 2007, is located in Austin, Texas. For more information, visit www.mirnatherapeutics.com.

More:

About Asuragen, Inc.

Asuragen is a fully integrated molecular diagnostics company focused on molecular oncology and early detection of cancer with emphasis on microRNA. 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 and CLIA testing services and an established cGMP manufacturing facility that allow 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.

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