PPD Discovery Launches the First Pass(TM) Program; The First Internet-based Software Application to Create Preclinical Drug Development Plans

WILMINGTON, N.C., March 27 /PRNewswire/ -- PPD Discovery, a wholly-owned subsidiary of PPD, Inc. (Nasdaq: PPD)), today announced the release of First Pass(TM), an internet-based software application used to outline the parameters and costs along a timeline for conducting multiple preclinical development plans specific to a drug or class of drugs.

With patent pending, the proprietary First Pass application was developed as a management tool to enable clients to quickly outline at a desktop computer preclinical development plans that address the scientific issues and critical factors for a potential drug or class of drugs. The First Pass program provides integrated technical information to design and manage development plans while offering useful clinical, regulatory and experimental design information to the user. Throughout the design of the preclinical plan, the program provides continual updates on cost, time and material values, acting as a problem-solving tool by identifying potential issues and conflicting tasks or interacting factors.

"Traditional project management tools fail to provide the kind of detail needed to understand the key technical relationships, design parameters and information requirements necessary to make complex preclinical projects successful," said Brad Brown, Ph.D., vice president of research at PPD Discovery. "The First Pass program is designed to help a discovery team understand what steps of the discovery process are on the critical decision path to nominating a drug candidate and what technologies may be ancillary to drug candidate selection."

The First Pass program can be used to identify preclinical studies necessary for any phase of a clinical program from pre-Investigational New Drug (IND) through New Drug Application (NDA) submissions. The program provides an estimated cost for a proposed preclinical plan, including the amount of Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) and non-GMP material required for selected studies. It exposes any potential conflicts that might result from task interactions or exist between the preclinical and proposed clinical development plans. In addition, the First Pass program delivers a Gantt chart that displays the necessary parameters in a preclinical program, including chemistry, primary pharmacology, safety pharmacology, absorption, distribution, metabolism, excretion, and all toxicology studies. The chart provides a visual definition of the rate limiting steps in the early development stages and serves to illuminate the end points that facilitate project flow.

"There is a rapidly increasing number of drug candidates due to advances in high-throughput screening, combinatorial chemistry technologies and the output from genomics," stated Fred Eshelman, chief executive officer at PPD. "With this increase comes the rise of financial demands on our clients to conduct the associated drug development programs. The First Pass program is another demonstration of our commitment to help clients manage complex data challenges and maximize their ROI on their R&D investments earlier in the drug development process."

PPD Discovery serves as the drug discovery technology subsidiary of PPD, Inc., a leading global provider of discovery research and development resources for pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies. In addition to providing innovative technologies for identifying targets and prioritizing, optimizing and profiling potential drug candidates, PPD Discovery provides consulting strategies for design and management of customized preclinical programs from early screening of new chemical entities (NCEs) through Investigational New Drug (IND) submission.

With a corporate mission to provide services that maximize the return on clients' R&D investments, PPD (Nasdaq: PPD)) provides innovative technologies, therapeutic expertise and comprehensive services for drug discovery and preclinical programs, Phase I-IV clinical development and post-market support. The company has more than 3,500 professionals in 47 offices in 19 countries around the world.

Except for historical information, all of the statements, expectations and assumptions, including expectations and assumptions about the value and acceptance in the marketplace for First Pass, contained in the foregoing are forward-looking statements that involve a number of risks and uncertainties. Although PPD has used best efforts to be accurate in making those forward-looking statements, it is possible that the assumptions made by management may not materialize. In addition, other important factors which could cause results to differ materially include the following: economic conditions in the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries; outsourcing trends in the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries; risks associated with acquisitions; loss of large contracts; competition within the CRO and pharmaceutical industries; continued success in sales growth; the ability to attract and retain key personnel; and the risk factors set forth from time to time in the SEC filings for PPD, copies of which are available upon request from the PPD investor relations department.

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