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MetriGenix and Neuralstem Announce the Co-Development of a Neurodegeneration Chip

-- Companies have jointly identified genes expressed in models of human neurodegeneration to be spotted on a unique chip --

GAITHERSBURG, Md.—September 4, 2002— MetriGenix, Inc., an emerging biotechnology company focused on creating leading bioanalytical tools, and Neuralstem, Inc., the leader in human central nervous system (CNS) stem cell technology, announced that a neurodegeneration chip will be the first product to be launched under a collaborative research agreement begun in 2001 to develop unique theme-based chips with markers of CNS diseases and disorders. The neurodegeneration chip, which should provide drug discovery companies with a viable research and screening tool for CNS-related diseases, will be based on gene content obtained through disease paradigms modeled from Neuralstem's human neuronal assays. The chip platform will be based upon MetriGenix' patented 4D Array System™. The commercial launch of the neurodegeneration chip is anticipated during the fourth quarter of 2002.

“Smaller, less expensive, focused content microarrays are clearly going to play an important role in drug discovery,” said Neuralstem President and CEO Richard Garr. “MetriGenix's unique platform will enable companies to move to high-throughput genomic target screening. Our jointly developed products will allow companies to screen against genomic targets identified from experiments on our human CNS stem cell derived neurons.”

Neuralstem's highly characterized human CNS stem cells have undergone expression analysis through all stages of development, through disease model assays and under CNS drug influences. This genomic information is designed to assist pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies in identifying drug candidates with less potential toxicity and more direct activity on CNS targets. This combination of microarray technology and human CNS gene information is ideal for screening compounds for bioactivity and toxicity. Neuralstem's human CNS neuronal cultures will be made available to 4D Array System™ customers for proprietary discovery efforts and follow-up screening and validation.

The MetriGenix Flow-thru Chip™ is a novel biochip platform that enables researchers to perform simple or multiple determinations on a single array. The MetriGenix 4D Array System™ utilizes the patented flow-through design that optimizes the surface area-to-volume ratio to provide superior performance in comparison to conventional microarrays. The 4D Array System™ has shorter hybridization times, provides larger binding/signal capacity, and is more readily automated than flat biochips. The result is a faster, more robust platform that requires smaller amounts of sample and reagents.

Dr. Andrew O’Beirne, Dr.P.H., MetriGenix’s President and Chief Executive Officer commented, “We are very excited about the progress made by this collaboration with Neuralstem, which will bring together the patented Flow-thru Chip™ platform with Neuralstem’s proprietary patented human neural cell system technology. This combination will provide a unique gene expression platform for the evaluation of drug interactions and for the study of CNS diseases. We believe that this partnership has the potential to provide a product offering that is not only unique, but which also can be of significant benefit to the study and treatment of neurological disease.”

MetriGenix Overview

MetriGenix, Inc. is a biotechnology company focused on developing revolutionary bioanalytical tools based on its integrated Flow-thru Chip™ technology. The Flow-thru Chip™ technology is a scaleable, high-performance microarray platform with a microchannel structure that results in a much larger surface area-to-volume ratio than is attained with flat surface platforms. The unique structure of the Flow-thru Chip™ technology yields performance enhancements in capacity, kinetics, and uniformity for biological sensing applications. MetriGenix has combined the Flow-thru Chip™ technology, which includes custom and branded chips, and its associated instrumentation, into a complete biomolecular analysis solution—the 4D Array System™. The 4D Array System™ has been developed for pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies for use in biological discovery programs, pharmaceutical screening, genetic diagnostics and individualized disease management. For additional information about MetriGenix and the Flow-thru Chip™, technology and the 4D Array System™, please call 301/987-1716 or visit the Company Web site at www.metrigenix.com.

Neuralstem Overview

Neuralstem, Inc. is a privately held biopharmaceutical company commercializing proprietary, patented central nervous system (CNS) stem cell technology and human neurons derived from their CNS stem cells. This proprietary stem cell technology is itself a powerful new therapeutic, as well as a suite of research tools which accelerate drug discovery and development. Neuralstem is developing a new generation of biotherapeutic products to treat and cure neurodegenerative and neurological disorders of the brain and spinal cord, including Parkinson’s, Alzheimer’s, stroke, multiple sclerosis, spinal cord injury, and epilepsy.

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