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Media Contacts:

At Heat Biologics:

Liz Roop, NPC Creative Services
(813) 960-5092 ext. 302
liz@npccs.com

At University of Miami Miller School of Medicine:

Lisa Worley
Office of Medical Communications
305-243-5184 / 305-458-9654
Lworley2@med.miami.edu

NIH Awards Grant to Heat Biologics for Potential Asthma Cure

MIAMI – (March 1, 2010) – Heat Biologics, a clinical-stage immunotherapy company focused on developing off-the-shelf drugs to combat a wide range of diseases, has received a \$300,000 National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant for its potentially groundbreaking technology to fight asthma, a disease that affects 24 million people and kills 5,000 annually in the United States alone.

Developed at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, Heat's proprietary therapy attacks the root cause of asthma – an overactive immune system – to block the onset of the disease. Available asthma therapies currently address only symptoms, including wheezing, shortness of breath, chest tightness, cough and excessive mucus.

Asthma arises when the immune system misinterprets regular environmental elements, such as dust, pollen, cold temperatures, etc., as threats. When such a threat is perceived, a pro-inflammatory protein ramps up. This TNF-related cytokine, known as TL1A, is critical in triggering an immunological inflammatory cascade that eventually launches asthma symptoms within the airways.

Heat is developing a proprietary antibody that selectively inhibits the immune system. In animal studies, Heat's antibody successfully blocks the activity of TL1A, preventing chronic inflammation in the lungs and enabling them to repair any previous asthma-induced damage. With this discovery and others, Heat is helping to pioneer a new class of therapeutic agents that fight disease by fine-tuning the immune system.

The therapeutic innovation is the work of Eckhard Podack, M.D., Ph.D., chair of the Department of Microbiology and Immunology at the Miller School of Medicine.

"We have shown in preclinical studies that blocking TL1A inhibits the earliest step known in the development of allergic asthma and asthma attacks. The development of treatments based on this finding, which is funded by this grant, opens new avenues to help asthmatics and potentially reverse the disease process," said Dr. Podack.

The NIH Phase I grant will enable Heat to produce high-quality material for use in preclinical safety studies. It will also allow for in-depth analysis of the antibody mechanism and a demonstration of the potential therapeutic benefits to asthmatics. Based on the success of Phase I, Heat Biologics intends to pursue NIH multi-million dollar Phase II awards to initiate human trials.

“We are excited that Dr. Podack’s work has caught the attention and won initial approval of the National Institutes of Health,” said Heat Biologics President Taffy Williams, Ph.D. “We believe his revolutionary approach to treating asthma has tremendous potential.”

Adds Bart Chernow, M.D., professor of medicine and vice provost for technology advancement at the University of Miami: “Asthma is a common, often difficult-to-treat disease. This NIH grant is recognition of the potential Dr. Podack’s work has to truly impact asthma patients’ quality of life.”

It costs \$14 billion annually to treat asthmatic patients in the United States. Worldwide it is estimated that 200,000 people die from severe asthma each year.

About Heat Biologics

Heat Biologics (www.heatbio.com) is a clinical-stage company focused on developing novel, off-the-shelf drugs that modulate the immune system to combat a wide range of diseases. Heat’s proprietary HS-System platform exploits the natural ability of diseased cells to activate the immune system, amplifying our natural defenses against a wide range of conditions. The HS-System is applicable to a wide range of cancers as well as to viral infections like HIV, HCV, influenza and other areas of high unmet need. Heat is currently in Phase I/II clinical trials with its first product to treat Non Small Cell Lung Cancer (NSCLC) and has a robust pipeline of products in various stages of preclinical testing. For more information, please contact Heat Biologics, 305-432-4684.