



Contact: Ted Natoli
Ligon Discovery
(617) 453-0952 x703
press@ligondiscovery.com

Ligon Discovery Collaborates with Bayer Schering Pharma to Discover Potential First-in-Class Small Molecule Therapeutics

-SMM Platform Enables Screening Every Protein in Target Class-

Cambridge, MA - September 29, 2010 – Ligon Discovery, the innovator of Small Molecule Microarray technology, today announced that it has partnered with Bayer Schering Pharma AG, Germany, to apply its proprietary Small Molecule Microarray screening platform (SMM) to discover potential first-in-class drug candidates for new disease targets.

Ligon's SMM technology offers a completely differentiated approach to the identification of valid drug leads for historically intractable disease targets, potentially overcoming a critical obstacle in drug discovery. The advantages of the SMM screening format come from inverting conventional target-based screening methods - affixing the drug candidates to a slide allows using cell lysates rather than developing a complex assay based on a full understanding of a protein target's functions. This fundamental switch in assay setup enables, for the first time, the possibility of screening every protein in an entire target class or every protein in a disease pathway.

"Ligon is excited to collaborate with a leading global pharmaceutical company to discover drugs for important diseases that have previously proven difficult to address. Our partnership with Bayer Schering Pharma provides the opportunity to demonstrate the unique capabilities of SMM, particularly to screen challenging targets and identify unique starting points for drug development," commented Christian Bailey, Chief Executive Officer of Ligon Discovery.

Ligon's intellectual property estate encompasses the chemistry and methods that enable the attachment of all chemical collections whether synthetic, natural, bioactive, or diversity-oriented. This allows Ligon to screen with any existing drug library, comprised of compounds that are more drug-like and amenable to development rather than compounds biased by requirements of other screening approaches. Because hits from SMM are based on existing compound libraries, they may require less downstream optimization in the form of medicinal chemistry and may progress more rapidly to clinical success.

"SMM screening has led to the discovery of many validated inhibitors against diverse drug targets including protein kinases, histone deacetylases, extracellular growth factors, and transcription factors," said Errol DeSouza, PhD, Executive Chairman of Ligon Discovery and former Head of US R&D for Aventis. "We therefore believe that SMM is an extremely promising and powerful tool in the effort to address historically intractable targets."



About Small Molecule Microarray Screening Technology (SMM)

SMM arrays are manufactured by robotically printing unmodified drug compound collections at high density onto glass slides using a patented chemical attachment that allows the compound to retain activity as if in free solution. Hundreds of thousands of compounds on a few arrays can be rapidly screened in parallel against hundreds of protein targets. Ligon's SMM surface chemistry was specifically developed to allow the attachment of chemical collections whether synthetic, natural, bioactive, or diversity-oriented. No special moiety is required for attachment, so Ligon's SMM is compatible with almost any existing chemical collection. Another key advantage of the screening format is minimal assay development, regardless of target class. Finally, SMM works with very small amounts of purified protein (tagged or native), protein complexes or even cell lysates. The unprecedented throughput of SMM offers a new paradigm for drug discovery based upon complete screening of all potential targets in a molecular pathway or protein family, and upfront assessment of drug selectivity among related proteins, versus the conventional paradigm of single target screening and after-the-fact selectivity optimization.

About Ligon Discovery

Ligon Discovery identifies drugs in the fields of oncology and coagulation disorders using its proprietary Small Molecule Microarray screening technology (SMM). Ligon's SMM is a fundamental shift in the drug discovery process, and works by inverting traditional drug screening methods. With funding from incTANK Ventures, Ligon has commercialized SMM from the laboratory of Stuart Schreiber, PhD at Harvard University, and has already screened over eighty targets. For more information, visit www.ligondiscovery.com.

###