Caliper Technologies and Neurocrine Biosciences to Collaborate on The Discovery of New Neurological Therapies

January 12, 1999

Caliper Recruits Industry Leader to Head New Business Activity

MOUNTAIN VIEW, Calif., Jan. 12 /PRNewswire/ -- Caliper Technologies Corp. and Neurocrine Biosciences Inc. (Nasdaq: NBIX) announced today that they have entered into a collaborative research agreement to jointly discover drugs that treat diseases of the central nervous system and immune systems. The goal of the collaborative agreement is the rapid discovery of lead compounds directed against targets derived from Neurocrine's neurogenomics program. The collaboration will develop ultra-high-throughput screening assays based on Caliper's "lab on a chip" technology. Neurocrine is the first in a series of Value Added Screening Collaborations(VASCs) that Caliper will enter into, under which leading edge biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies can dramatically accelerate and expand their drug discovery efforts utilizing Caliper's enabling "lab-on-a-chip" technology. Dr. C. Nicholas Hodge, Caliper's new Director of Drug Discovery Technologies, will head up the program at Caliper.

Under the terms of the agreement, the two companies will jointly develop at least thirty-five novel enzyme, receptor and functional cellular based assays derived from Neurocrine's neurogenomics program and screen these assays against Neurocrine's proprietary chemical library as well as Caliper's own compound collection. Neurocrine will pay Caliper undisclosed amounts upon delivery of screening data, as well as product development milestones and royalties on downstream product revenues.

Caliper's high throughput screening systems will enable hundreds of thousands of chemical library compounds to be screened per day, and decrease reagent and compound consumption by three to five orders of magnitude compared to the best current methods. These systems therefore enable the screening of potential targets early in the discovery process by eliminating the need for expensive and time-intensive target scale-up and optimization programs. The LabChip(TM) format also taps the true potential of split-mix combinatorial chemistry methods, since thousands of screens can be performed from the product of a single bead.

"We are very excited about working with Caliper," said Gary Lyons Neurocrine's CEO. "We have evaluated numerous high-throughput screening technologies and feel that Caliper's is a unique and exciting opportunity. The technology has high throughput capabilities, addresses a broad range of assay types and formats, requiring incredibly small reagent consumption, and leads to high data content and reproducibility. In addition, Caliper represents the first lab-on-a-chip company to bring microfluidics technology to the commercial arena."

Dr. C. Nicholas Hodge, who recently joined Caliper from DuPont-Merck Pharmaceuticals where he was Director of Computer Aided Drug Design, will head the VASC program at Caliper. At DuPont-Merck, Dr. Hodge led a multidisciplinary team of over twenty scientists utilizing rational drug design techniques to design and synthesize new pharmaceutical agents. Dr. Hodge is a recognized leader in the field of novel drug discovery technologies; the design of cyclic urea HIV protease inhibitors, described in Science in 1994, is cited as one of the seminal examples of rational drug design. Dr. Hodge received his Ph.D. degree in Chemistry from Cornell University in 1985.

"This is a very important step in Caliper's corporate development," said Calvin Chow, Caliper's COO. "Together with the successful drug discovery and drug development team at Neurocrine, we are launching an effort to use our own lab-on-a-chip technology in its most advanced form for the highest value end: discovery of new candidate drugs."

Neurocrine Biosciences is a leading neuroscience company focused on the discovery and development of novel therapeutics for neuropsychiatric, neuroinflammatory and neurodegenerative diseases and disorders. The Company presently has six products in clinical development for indications such as anxiety, depression, Alzheimer's disease, multiple sclerosis, glioblastoma, insomnia and diabetes.

Neurocrine Biosciences, Inc. news releases are available free of charge through PR Newswires' Company News On-Call fax service. For a menu of Neurocrine's previous releases, or to receive a specific release via fax call: 800-758-5804, ext. 604138, or use the Internet via http://www.prnewswire.com.

Caliper Technologies designs and manufacturers LabChips(TM) and LabChip(TM) systems that enable high-throughput experimentation and information access for faster drug discovery, improved medical treatment, and more accurate and cost-effective biological and genetic research. Caliper's microfluidic LabChips(TM) -- which process fluids in a manner analogous to the way that semiconductors process electrons -- execute multiple biological tests in seconds. Experimental data, in digital form, can be stored in databases, accessed via networks and shared by researchers. With its ability to accelerate experimentation and expand access to information, Caliper's LabChip(TM) technology is dramatically changing the fundamental processes of research, discovery and diagnosis. Since its incorporation in 1995, Caliper has forged major strategic partnerships and expanded its intellectual property portfolio to become a leader in Lab-on-a-Chip technology. Caliper is commercializing its proprietary LabChip(TM) products through strategic relationships that include Hewlett-Packard, Hoffmann-La Roche and Dow Chemical. Information about Caliper's products and services can be found on the World Wide Web at http://www.calipertech.com. LabChip(TM) is a registered trademark of Caliper Technologies Corp. of Mountain View, Calif.
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