CONTACT:
Bradford Weller, CEO bweller@quercusmoleculardesign.com
Dennis Wright, PhD dwright@quercusmoleculardesign.com
Sandra Weller, PhD sweller@quercusmoleculardesign.com

Quercus Molecular Design Receives Phase I STTR Funding for Herpes Simplex Virus Drug Discovery

Farmington CT – Quercus Molecular Design, a University of Connecticut (UConn) related startup company, has received a Phase I Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) award in the amount of US$256,000 from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. The one-year grant focuses on the development of multi-targeting inhibitors that block two or more essential HSV (Herpes Simplex Virus) proteins used in reproduction of the virus.

This approach is expected to lead to the production of antiviral therapeutics that are more potent and less susceptible to the development of mutation-based drug resistance. Currently, patients are often treated with a "cocktail" of drugs against different targets of a disease to avoid resistance increase the risk of negative side effects. So developing single drugs capable of multi-targeting represents a huge potential in the treatment of infectious disease. QMD is leasing incubator space from the UConn Technology Incubation Program (TIP) for this project, and also benefits from the "Program in Innovative Therapeutics for Connecticut's Health" (PITCH), a state-funded partnership between UConn and Yale University.

The QMD team brings extensive academic experience in molecular virology, drug resistance, cancer therapies, and medicinal chemistry, as well as business expertise. The collaboration of QMD co-founders Dr. Dennis Wright, PhD, QMD Chief Chemistry Officer and Professor of Medicinal Chemistry at University of Connecticut, and Sandra Weller, PhD, QMD Chief Biology Officer and Chair of the Department of Molecular Biology and Biophysics at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine, has produced a unique partnership capable of exploiting the new frontier at the interface of chemistry and biology.

"We couldn't be more pleased and excited about this STTR funding," Dr. Wright explained. "It affirms the significance of the technology we are developing, and we look forward to taking our findings to the next level. Small molecule inhibitors hold great promise for fighting cancers and other infectious diseases."

Bradford Weller, QMD's CEO and brother of Dr. Weller, added, "Our goal is to hasten the development of new therapies by identifying and honing the tremendous research coming out of university laboratories, and we will be actively partnering with the pharmaceutical community to make this happen."

More information:
Quercus Molecular Design www.quercusmoleculardesign.com
PITCH http://research.uconn.edu/pitch-2/
TIP http://entrepreneurship.uconn.edu/members/technology-incubation-program-tip/

# # #