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ALS Therapy Development Institute Signs Collaboration Agreement with the Allen Institute for Brain Science

Long-term arrangement between two leading non-profit research institutes designed to validate drug targets for the fatal neurodegenerative disease that affects 30,000 Americans

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — April 08, 2008 — The ALS Therapy Development Institute (ALS TDI) today announced it has entered into an agreement with the Allen Institute for Brain Science in Seattle, Wash. for *in situ* hybridization (ISH) services using diseased tissues from a preclinical animal model of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis — ALS, or Lou Gehrig’s disease. ALS is a progressive and fatal neurodegenerative disease with no known cause or cure. Under the terms of the agreement, the Allen Institute will perform ISH for genes, in the spinal cord, identified by ALS TDI researchers as being associated with the disease’s progression. The aim of this work is to identify cells that are associated with changes in gene expression so that treatments can be directed towards those cells specifically.

“The ongoing data mining efforts at the ALS TDI are identifying hundreds of therapeutic targets that need to be evaluated *in vivo*. Identification of cells to be targeted by treatments is a crucial step in therapeutic development,” said Steven Perrin, Ph.D., Chief Scientific Officer of ALS TDI. “The publication of the Allen Brain Atlas—Mouse Brain project established the Allen Institute as leaders in ISH technologies and capabilities.”

At the end of 2007, ALS TDI completed an enormous database of transcriptome information for the SOD1 mouse model, the leading mouse model used internationally by ALS researchers. ALS TDI, a leader in translational research for ALS, has also initiated a similar project and experiment collecting blood samples from people living with the disease today and is expected to expand their collection project and experiments to include other tissues. Through a multi-year funding partnership with the Muscular Dystrophy Association and its Augie’s Quest Initiative, ALS TDI expanded its research program to include the largest genomic research program in the history of the disease.

“The goal of the collaboration is to determine exactly where in the spinal cord the genes associated with the progression of ALS are active,” said Elaine Jones, Chief Operating Officer of the Allen Institute for Brain Science. “Helping scientists worldwide accelerate their research programs is central to our mission. We’re thrilled to be working with ALS TDI to help advance ALS research.”

More...

The first samples will arrive from ALS TDI to the Allen Institute in April 2008. A progress report will be provided as part of an annual Leadership Summit and research symposium hosted by ALS TDI in Boston, Mass. on October 20, 2008.

About ALS Therapy Development Institute

The ALS Therapy Development Institute (www.als.net), based in Cambridge, Mass., operates the world's largest research and development program focused exclusively on ALS. Its staff of 30 scientists and research technicians work on behalf of ALS patients to discover and advance novel therapeutics for treating and ultimately curing ALS. The non-profit biotechnology institute excels in identifying novel disease targets, discovering compounds that may act against these targets, and screening potential treatments for clinical development. For more information, visit www.als.net or call 617.441.7200.

About the Allen Institute for Brain Science

Launched in 2003, the Seattle-based Allen Institute for Brain Science is an independent, 501(c)(3) nonprofit medical research organization dedicated to advancing brain research. Started with \$100 million in seed money from philanthropist Paul G. Allen, the Institute takes on projects at the leading edge of science—far-reaching projects at the intersection of biology and technology. The resulting data create publicly available resources that fuel discovery for countless other researchers worldwide. The Institute's data and tools are available on the web free of charge at www.alleninstitute.org.

About Augie's Quest

Fitness pioneer Augie Nieto started Augie's Quest (www.augiesquest.org) in conjunction with MDA's ALS Division. Nieto is co-founder and former president of Life Fitness of Chicago, and chairman of Octane Fitness. He and his wife, Lynne, serve as co-chairpersons of MDA's ALS Division. Nieto received a diagnosis of ALS in March 2005.

About MDA

MDA (www.mda.org) is the world's largest provider of ALS services and funder of ALS research. Over the years, it has expended almost \$200 million in this effort. It operates 225 neuromuscular disease clinics across the country and 37 ALS-specific research and care centers.