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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **ALS Therapy Development Institute Receives \$1.6 million Grant from the Department of Defense for Lou Gehrig's disease Research**

*ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease) named Service Related Disorder Earlier Last Year*

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – *January 12, 2010* – In recognition of multiple studies connecting ALS to military service, the 2010 Defense Appropriations Act, signed by President Obama on December 22, 2009, provided for the grant of \$1.6 million for research and development of potential therapeutics for Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS, Lou Gehrig's disease). Deemed a "service-related disorder" by the Veterans Administration (VA) in July of 2008, ALS affects approximately 30,000 Americans at any given time. With no robust therapeutics currently available, those afflicted survive on average only 36 months from diagnosis. The funding approved will be sent to the ALS Therapy Development Institute (ALS TDI), a non-profit, independent research center devoted to the development of therapeutics that slow and stop progression of the fatal neurodegenerative disease.

"This grant from the [Department of Defense], bringing their total spent on ALS research at our Institute alone to nearly \$5.5 million over a period of five years, shows their commitment to our veterans. It is unacceptable that those stricken by the disease, for whatever reason, including our servicemen and servicewomen returning from war, do not have therapeutic options available. We must move faster toward providing truly efficacious interventions for all those living with ALS today," said Steve Perrin, Ph.D., chief executive officer and chief scientific officer at ALS TDI.

The request for spending was sponsored by Congressman Michael Capuano (D-MA). "Congressman Capuano and his staff recognize the need to get out ahead of this issue. They have been champions for those veterans who have sacrificed for our country, only to come home to face this horrible disease. We are grateful and mindful of the fact that they believe in ALS TDI's ability to discover and develop treatments for veterans and all those facing ALS," said Carol Hamilton, director of government affairs for ALS TDI.

Through a multi-year contract with the DOD, ALS TDI will use the funding to advance promising therapies for ALS through its rigorous preclinical screen model. The preclinical drug discovery and development program at ALS TDI is made up of several stages, including both in vitro and in vivo screening platforms. This funding will have a direct impact on the Institute's ability to identify, validate and advance several, potential therapeutics toward the clinic. Currently, the Institute has 30 projects in its active drug development pipeline, including small molecules, gene therapeutic and biologics. The Institute provides updates on its research efforts directly to the ALS community through a variety of mechanisms, including a quarterly research webcast, the next of which will be held on January 14, 2010.

"This grant is designed to move with the same sense of urgency felt by those living with ALS today, and their families. This direct appropriation to ALS TDI will cut down on the time it takes to get money into the lab by avoiding many of the traditional bureaucratic obstacles, all the while ensuring strict

oversight of how this money is spent. It is these types of investments that will ultimately get the job done for our veterans and all others facing ALS today. This is about turning hope into work, and we are grateful for the opportunity to follow-through on that charge,” continued Dr. Perrin.

Of note, as well, is the support of other members of Congress. The late Senator Edward Kennedy provided a long-term commitment to ALS TDI, and Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AL), of The Senate Appropriations Committee, and Congressman Henry Brown (R-SC), Ranking Member of the House VA Subcommittee on Health have both been very helpful in their commitment to addressing the needs of veterans, and all citizens living with ALS. The Institute would also like to recognize Brigadier General Tom Mikolajcik, USAF (Ret.), who was diagnosed with ALS in 2005, for his relentless efforts on behalf of military veterans.

### **About ALS TDI**

The mission of the ALS Therapy Development Institute (ALS TDI) is to develop effective therapeutics that slow or stop amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS, Lou Gehrig’s disease), as soon as possible. Focused on meeting this urgent unmet medical need, ALS TDI executes a robust discovery program, while running the world’s largest efforts to pre-clinically validate potential therapeutics; including small molecules, protein biologics, gene therapies and cell-based constructs. The world’s first non-profit biotech, ALS TDI has developed an industrial-scale platform that allows for the development and testing of dozens of potential therapeutics each year. Built by and for patients, the Institute is the world's only non-profit biotechnology company with more than 30 professional scientists. In addition, the Cambridge, Massachusetts based research Institute collaborates with leaders in both academia and industry. For more information, please visit us online at [www.als.net](http://www.als.net).

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