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Esperion Therapeutics and Cleveland Clinic Establish Collaboration for Research Related to HDL Therapies

Program involving leading researchers in HDL will work to advance multiple development programs targeting new therapies to treat cardio-metabolic disease.

Esperion Therapeutics, a privately held biopharmaceutical company working to discover, develop and commercialize treatments for cardiovascular and metabolic diseases, today announced the establishment of a collaborative research agreement with Cleveland Clinic, one of the world's leading academic medical centers. The collaboration will work to advance research targeting new HDL therapies to treat cardiovascular disease.

The research will be led by Stanley L. Hazen, M.D., Ph.D., Director, Center for Cardiovascular Diagnostics and Prevention at Cleveland Clinic, and Jonathan D. Smith, Ph.D., Staff, Department of Cell Biology of Cleveland Clinic's Lerner Research Institute.

"When Esperion was first founded, we collaborated with Cleveland Clinic in a research effort that showed for the first time that HDL can reverse atherosclerosis in acute coronary patients. The results were published in the Journal of the American Medical Association in 2003," said Roger Newton, Ph.D., President and CEO of Esperion. "When we re-established Esperion in 2008, our goal was to continue this research tradition. We are once again bringing together the outstanding resources and expertise at both Esperion and Cleveland Clinic to advance important research efforts in HDL in the years ahead."

Researchers at Esperion are working to develop novel therapies to treat cardio-metabolic disease including therapies based on HDL, the body's "good" cholesterol, which has been shown to play an important role in lipid management. The company development platform includes therapies designed to mimic or enhance the function of HDL in managing and removing cholesterol and other lipids from atherosclerotic plaques. Researchers at Esperion have initiated preclinical and clinical research related to a variety of pathways for better lipid regulation to treat the full spectrum of cardio-metabolic diseases, from early risk factors to acute coronary syndromes and atherosclerosis.

"Cleveland Clinic has had a long history of researching HDL as it relates to cardiovascular disease. We hope this collaboration will further our ability to identify and advance new therapies to regulate lipids and treat cardio-metabolic disease effectively," said Dr. Hazen.

The collaboration agreement was developed in conjunction with Cleveland Clinic Innovations, the corporate venturing arm of Cleveland Clinic. The collaboration will further expand Esperion's established focus on research in lipid regulating therapies. In November 2009 the company initiated a Phase I clinical study for ETC-1002, a novel small molecule compound designed to beneficially regulate levels of plasma lipids and lipoproteins. ETC-1002 is being developed to treat dyslipidemia, an early-stage risk factor of coronary artery disease and associated metabolic syndromes. ETC-1002 targets lipid metabolism in two ways: first, by inhibiting fatty acid and cholesterol synthesis; and second, by enhancing oxidation of fatty acids. ETC-1002 therefore has the potential to lower LDL-C and triglycerides and also to increase HDL-C.

"We have seen over the past decade the potential for HDL therapies to have a positive impact on our ability to treat cardiovascular disease. In collaboration with the Esperion team, our goal is to identify the most promising opportunities to use HDL therapy to treat disease and improve human health in the years ahead," Dr. Smith said.

About Esperion Therapeutics

Esperion Therapeutics, Inc., located in Plymouth, Michigan, discovers and develops novel therapies for the treatment of cardiovascular and metabolic diseases. The company is funded by top tier venture capital investors including Alta Partners, Aisling Capital, Domain Associates, Arboretum Ventures and Asset Management Company. For more information please visit www.esperion.com.

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