RESEARCH FOUNDATIONS COLLABORATE TO FUND REPOSITORY OF PROMISING CNS-ACTIVE COMPOUNDS

Collaborative CNS Screening Initiative (CCSI) Aims to Share Knowledge and Speed Drug Discovery

NEW YORK, February 28, 2013 – The Alzheimer's Drug Discovery Foundation (ADDF), Beyond Batten Disease Foundation (BBDF) and the National Multiple Sclerosis Society today announced a funding collaboration to support the creation of the Collaborative CNS Screening Initiative (CCSI), a central repository of chemical compounds that have shown significant Central Nervous System (CNS) activity. Led by the Harvard NeuroDiscovery Center's Laboratory for Drug Discovery in Neurodegeneration (LDDN), at Brigham and Women's Hospital, the CCSI will share emerging compounds with the potential to treat diseases of the CNS among academic CNS drug discovery centers to maximize their potential and accelerate drug discovery efforts within the neuroscience community.

"With multiple drug discovery centers around the world developing compounds for Alzheimer's disease and other brain disorders, the CCSI offers an invaluable opportunity to harness a growing body of CNS-active compounds and use it to drive new discoveries," said Howard Fillit, MD, executive director and chief scientific officer of the Alzheimer's Drug Discovery Foundation. "We are proud to partner with BBDF and the Society to fund this important initiative."

Through the CCSI, screening and early-stage drug discovery centers will submit anonymous CNS-active compounds to a highly selective, shared library. Eligible compounds must have not only demonstrated potential through primary screens but be validated through secondary assays, and exhibit other promising characteristics such as benefiting from chemical optimization. The CCSI library will be made available to participating centers to include in their ongoing screening, which will increase the exposure of the shared compounds to a wide range of assays, diseases and conditions to identify beneficial activities. Centers that discover novel activity will be connected with the contributing center to discuss further drug development of the compound.

"We envisioned CCSI as a simple, cost-effective way to stimulate novel collaborations and accelerate the drug discovery process for the benefit of patients suffering with CNS diseases. The concept is so straightforward, yet funding is scarce for such early-stage initiatives," said Marcie Glicksman, PhD, co-director of the Laboratory for Drug Discovery in Neurodegeneration at Brigham and Women's Hospital. "The support provided by ADDF, BBDF and the Society has made our vision a reality and we are grateful for their partnership."

"Sharing knowledge is fundamental to scientific progress and the earlier in the process we share, the better," said Danielle Kerkovich, PhD, principal scientist of Beyond Batten Disease Foundation. "The CCSI will help researchers pinpoint early-stage CNS compounds that warrant further development, creating a more efficient path toward innovation."

Nine academic centers have already committed to participate in the CCSI. Although it will begin as an academic collaboration, the CCSI may eventually expand to include industry and other organizations.

"The CCSI is a significant step toward our common goal of developing unique chemical compounds for neurodegenerative diseases," said Timothy Coetzee, PhD, chief research officer of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. "This initiative is a testament to what we can achieve when we eliminate our research silos and come together as a CNS community."

Funding for CCSI includes $43,344 from the ADDF, and $40,000 each from BBDF and the NMSS.

About the Alzheimer's Drug Discovery Foundation (ADDF)
The mission of the Alzheimer's Drug Discovery Foundation (ADDF) is to accelerate the discovery of drugs to prevent, treat and cure Alzheimer's disease, related dementias and cognitive aging. The ADDF has granted more than $60 million to fund almost 400 Alzheimer's drug discovery programs in academic centers and biotechnology companies in 18 countries. For more information, please visit www.AlzDiscovery.org.

About Beyond Batten Disease Foundation (BBDF)
Beyond Batten Disease Foundation works to cure and prevent juvenile Batten disease, a rare, inherited neurological disorder that strikes young children, first causing vision loss and seizures, then cognitive and motor impairment, and ultimately death by the late teens or 20s. The foundation raises funds for research and is leading development of an easy and inexpensive, groundbreaking blood test to detect the gene mutations that cause Batten disease as well as 600, other rare, serious and often fatal, childhood ailments. For more information, please visit www.beyondbatten.org.

About the National Multiple Sclerosis Society
The National MS Society addresses the challenges of each person affected by MS. To fulfill this mission, the Society funds cutting-edge research, drives change through advocacy, facilitates professional education, collaborates with MS organizations around the world, and provides programs and services designed to help people with MS and their families move forward with their lives. Last year alone, the Society invested $44 million to support over 350 research projects around the world, while providing program services to more than one million people. The Society is dedicated to achieving a world free of MS. Join the movement at www.nationalMSsociety.org.

About the Laboratory for Drug Discovery in Neurodegeneration
Launched in 2001, the LDDN is a joint program between the Harvard NeuroDiscovery Center and Brigham and Women's Hospital. With drug discovery expertise in biology and chemistry, the lab works with the academic community to help transform basic neurobiology discoveries into opportunities for drug discovery. The LDDN discovers chemical agents to act as the starting point for developing a new generation of drugs to treat neurological diseases. For more information, please visit www.neurodiscovery.harvard.edu/research/lddn_2.html.

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