



Massachusetts Life Sciences Center Announces 2010 Life Sciences Accelerator Program

The Center's Flagship Investment Program provides working capital to early-stage companies

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Waltham, MA – The Board of Directors of the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center today approved the launch of the 2010 Accelerator Loan Program, the second year of the Center's flagship investment program that provides working capital to early-stage life sciences companies. The Center will begin accepting online applications on Wednesday, February 24th, 2010 with an application deadline of Wednesday, March 24, 2010. A subsequent round will be conducted in the fall, with application dates to be announced. Applications will be accepted via the Center's web site at www.masslifesciences.com.

The Program has been capitalized with \$5.5 million for 2010. This year's program will offer loans of up to \$750,000 per company, an increase from the 2009 maximum loan amount of \$500,000. The Program seeks to "de-risk" start-up companies that are in need of financing to serve as flexible working capital or for the purchase of capital assets to help selected companies achieve product development milestones and obtain private investment. In addition, the loan terms will now include a warrant which will give the Center the right to purchase equity in the company at a specific price within a certain time frame.

The Program places an emphasis on applicants having raised other sources of capital. With this leverage the Accelerator Program will provide support to companies at the most critical stages of their development cycle, enabling them to conduct vital research and proof of concept studies, and attract subsequent investment, while improving the odds of bringing cutting edge innovation to the marketplace.

"This is another example of our administration's support for small businesses and the innovation economy," said Governor Deval Patrick. "These early-stage companies will be the big employers of tomorrow."

"The Center's Accelerator Program fills a critical gap in the life cycle of promising early-stage companies that are bringing new technologies to the marketplace," said Dr. Susan Windham-Bannister, President & CEO of the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center. "The success of last year's program leaves us confident about both the need, and the impact that the Accelerator Program is having on the success of early-stage companies, and on the development of cures and therapies that will improve the human condition."

Last year eighty-eight companies applied for the Accelerator Program. The Center awarded loans of up to \$500,000 to seven of those companies, a total investment of \$3.4 million. A list of 2009 awardees and loan amounts is available at www.masslifesciences.com/accelerator.html. Two of the Center's Accelerator portfolio companies, Westborough-based Wadsworth Medical Technologies and Woburn-based Pluromed, have since received FDA approval on their innovative medical technologies.

"The support and guidance offered by the Life Sciences Center and the financing we received through the Center's Accelerator Program has been fundamental to our success in bringing DermaLOC to market," said Dr. Andrew Fox, President & CEO of Westborough-based Wadsworth Medical Technologies. Wadsworth, a 2009 Accelerator loan recipient, produces DermaLOC, a wound closure system that applies tension to skin wounds to close them without anesthesia or sutures. DermaLOC received FDA approval this past September.

"The Accelerator loan we received from the Life Sciences Center has been a critical component of our success to date both in terms of capitalization during our fragile seed stage and the support and connections we have received from the Center" said Paris Wallace, Founder of Good Start Genetics, one of the 2009 Accelerator loan recipients. Good Start Genetics is a molecular diagnostic company based in Boston.

Applications will be subjected to a rigorous evaluation process, including a double-blind peer review, evaluation by the Center's Scientific Advisory Board (SAB), and further screening by the Center's Investment Sub-committee of the Board of Directors, which includes a live presentation by finalists. Final awards are scheduled to be determined by the Center's Board of Directors on June 23, 2010.

"Last year's strong interest in the Accelerator Program coupled with the diversity of applicants required us to develop an objective and transparent process that had extensive analysis, rigor, and vetting," said Dr. Harvey Lodish, Chair of the MLSC Scientific Advisory Board, Member of the Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research, and Professor of Biology and Professor of Bioengineering at MIT. "We look forward to deploying this process again in reviewing a new round of applicants and the innovative science that they are bringing to the table."

About the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center

The Massachusetts Life Sciences Center (MLSC) is a quasi-public agency of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts tasked with implementing the Massachusetts Life Sciences Act, a ten-year, \$1 billion initiative that was signed into law in June of 2008. The Center's mission is to create jobs in the life sciences and support vital scientific research that will improve the human condition. This work includes making financial investments in public and private institutions that are advancing life sciences research, development and commercialization as well as building ties between sectors of the Massachusetts life sciences community. For more information, visit www.masslifesciences.com.

About the Life Sciences Accelerator Loan Program

The Accelerator Loan Program provides unsecured debt financing to companies engaged in life sciences research and development, commercialization and manufacturing in Massachusetts. Target applicants generally are early-stage life sciences companies with a high-potential for technology commercialization, rapid growth, and private equity financing. The Accelerator program is designed to help sustain these companies through a critical stage of development and financing. One of the key eligibility criteria for the Center's Accelerator Program is that an applicant company has **not raised more than \$5 million in equity financing**.

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