



## **Massachusetts Life Sciences Center Announces 2011 Small Business Matching Grant (SBMG) Program Awards**

*Center Awards \$2 million to foster job growth and technology commercialization in the Massachusetts Life Sciences Supercluster*

For Immediate Release:

Date: May 25, 2011

Contact: Angus G. McQuilken, MLSC VP for Communications  
Phone: (617) 921-7749 Email: [amcquilken@masslifesciences.com](mailto:amcquilken@masslifesciences.com)

Waltham, MA – The Massachusetts Life Sciences Center’s Board of Directors (“the Center”) today awarded \$2 million in Small Business Matching Grants to four life sciences companies. Each company will receive \$500,000 from the Center that matches federal small business grant funding that the companies have been awarded previously. The grants represent the second round of awards issued under the Center’s Small Business Matching Grant (“SBMG”) Program, established by the Life Sciences Act of 2008. Three companies received \$1.5 million in grants through the Center’s first round of awards in May of 2010.

The Center’s Small Business Matching Grant Program, launched in January 2010 as part of the state’s ten-year, \$1 billion Life Sciences Initiative, leverages federal small business grant funding that early-stage life sciences companies in the Commonwealth have received for their work in life sciences research and development, commercialization and manufacturing. Goals of the Center’s program include the creation of jobs in Massachusetts through the commercialization of products with high potential for market adoption and penetration.

To qualify for the program, companies must have received Phase II or Post-Phase II small business innovation research (“SBIR”) or small business technology transfer (“STTR”) grants from Federal agencies such as the National Institutes of Health (“NIH”), National Science Foundation (“NSF”), or Department of Defense (“DOD”). They also must qualify as a small business under the guidelines of the U.S Small Business Administration (“SBA”). A total of 32 companies applied for the current round of the program and the four recipients were chosen through a competitive process after extensive review by the Center’s peer review panel, Scientific Advisory Board, and Board of Directors. Descriptions of the four recipient companies are as follows:

**Advantagene, Inc. (Newton)** – Advantagene, Inc. is a biopharmaceutical company focused on the development of a novel biologic immunotherapy to fight the recurrence of cancer. Their lead program is in Prostate cancer (Phase 3) with ProstAtak as the candidate. Based on results from Advantagene’s Phase 2 clinical study, ProstAtak™ may provide a three- to four-fold reduction in tumor recurrence, relative to current care.

**Hepregen, Inc. (Medford)** – Hepregen, Inc. is developing and commercializing HepatoPac™, a bio-engineered micro-liver platform, for use in drug discovery and development. HepatoPac is a liver model that narrows the costly gap caused by poor correlation of preclinical data (i.e., animal and in vitro studies) and clinical observations. Utilizing HepatoPac, toxicity screening, mechanistic toxicology, identification of secondary metabolites, drug-drug interaction, and transporter/clearance studies can all be performed in vitro with increased confidence in the clinically-relevant predictive value.

**Immunitics, Inc. (Boston)** – Immunitics, Inc. is focused on the development, manufacture and distribution of tests for infectious diseases and pathogens, including for clinical diagnostic and blood screening applications. Immunitics currently markets FDA-approved tests for Lyme disease and anthrax, and other tests for HIV and parasitic diseases. These products are based on proprietary immunoassay technology. The company plans to launch BacTx in 2011, a unique rapid test for bacteria in blood products.

**Reflectance Medical, Inc. (Westborough)** – Reflectance Medical, Inc. is a noninvasive physiologic sensor company that enables physicians, healthcare professionals, first responders, medics, patients, other care givers and consumers to quickly assess a patient/user’s metabolic status so that timely feedback and/or suitable therapeutic interventions can be delivered, cost effectively and with confidence. Reflectance is currently focused on securing its 510(k) regulatory approvals to allow it to commence commercialization of the company’s CareGuide platform. Once that is established, the company will work on expanding its platform.

“Helping our life sciences companies grow is all about creating jobs,” said Governor Deval Patrick. “As we continue to strengthen our global leadership in the life sciences, the Center’s Small Business Matching Grant Program is meeting an important need and making Massachusetts an even more attractive place for life sciences companies to locate and grow.”

“The SBMG program is another example of the Center’s leveraging strategy,” said Dr. Susan Windham-Bannister, President & CEO of the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center. “Federal SBIR/STTR grants provide Massachusetts companies with funds for their research and development; our SBMG program then provides the funds that companies need to bridge to commercialization. These four promising companies will bring cost-effective new treatments to the market and expand employment opportunities in Massachusetts. We are especially pleased that some of our grantees will contribute directly to the creation of biomanufacturing jobs in the Commonwealth.”

“The impact of the funding from the Center’s SBMG program has been very significant for Tetragenetics,” said R. Douglas Kahn, Chairman of Tetragenetics, a first-round grant recipient in 2010. “This new capital enabled the company to establish its corporate headquarters in Massachusetts and accelerate our vaccine and biotherapeutic development efforts by enabling our scientists to work together in a single lab for the first time.”

“The SBMG program is certainly recognized within the local early-stage biotechnology ecosystem as being a premier and very competitive program,” said John Reilly, Vice President of Business Development for Tetragenetics. “Having been awarded a grant is strong validation of Tetragenetics’ technology and market potential. That recognition has opened doors for our company to discussions with new Massachusetts-based strategic partners.”

“Small businesses are facing challenges and gaps with access to capital, and everyone agrees that job creation and development is critical to us emerging fully from the severe recession we have all experienced,” said Robert Nelson, Massachusetts District Director for the Small Business Administration. “The Small Business Matching Grant Program (SBMG) leverages on the strengths of the Massachusetts economy and the federal funds our small businesses receive through the SBIR and STTR programs. The program will not only facilitate the creation of high quality manufacturing jobs, which are so critical at this stage of the economic recovery, but also will help the Commonwealth to achieve real economic development.”

### **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](http://www.masslifesciences.com).

### **About the SBMG Program**

The Small Business Matching Grant Program is targeted at commercialization-ready life sciences companies that have received Phase II or Post Phase II small business innovation research (SBIR) or small business technology transfer (STTR) grants from federal agencies such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH), National Science Foundation (NSF), or Department of Defense (DOD). Target applicants are emerging life sciences companies whose products are production-ready and have high potential for market adoption and penetration, are poised for rapid growth that will create jobs in the Commonwealth, and are positioned for additional financing. Companies must be a small business, as defined by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). The Program will provide matching grants of up to \$500,000 to eligible life sciences companies. The Small Business Matching Grant Program is the newest program the Center is offering to support early-stage companies. Other programs include the Life Sciences Accelerator, through which the Center provides loan financing to early-stage companies, the Internship Challenge, the Life Sciences Tax Incentive Program, and the Center’s Cooperative Research Matching Grant Program.