

## **New Drug Discovery Technology Being Developed by Centrose Featured in *Nature***

MADISON, Wis., June 26, 2007 – Research demonstrating the power of new drug technology being developed by Centrose, a Madison, Wis.-based biopharmaceutical start-up, to overcome the increasingly vexing problem of drug resistance is highlighted in this week's issue of *Nature*.

The discussion of Centrose's new, exclusively-licensed technology in the most highly-regarded scientific journal comes as biotechnology in Wisconsin continues to heat up. Centrose joined other companies in one of the state's biotechnology hotspots when it opened its headquarters this week in Madison's Old Sauk Trails Business Park.

Centrose recently was awarded a Phase I Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) grant from the National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Disease (NIAID) to continue its development efforts and expects additional anticancer program funding to be approved later this year. The company also has been certified as a Qualified New Business Venture by the Wisconsin Department of Commerce, which enables new, accredited investors to receive tax credits for their investments in early-stage, high-growth potential companies like Centrose.

Drug resistance is having a profound effect on the health care system. The ability of an increasing number of bacteria and viruses to ward off even the most aggressive anti-infectives is driving up health care costs, according to the NIAID. More than 70% of the bacteria that cause hospital-acquired infections are resistant to at least one of the antibiotics most commonly used to treat them, including vancomycin, a powerful drug that is the antibiotic of last resort.

The study led by Centrose co-founder and UW-Madison Professor Jon Thorson was published last week in the *Journal of the American Chemical Society*. *Nature* this week reported that Centrose's technology allows for "...an easier way to create vancomycin-like compounds that demonstrate more potency than their predecessor. The study highlights the simplicity of generating large libraries of such analogs [compounds modified using Centrose's unique technology] for optimizing antibiotics to target highly resistant pathogens."

Centrose also plans to use its unique technology for methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, or MRSA, a bacterium responsible for more than 60% of hospital staph infections that can no longer be treated with methicillin, a penicillin-class antibiotic. A new national study released Monday by the Association for Professionals in Infection and Epidemiology (APIC) found that 46 out of every 1,000 hospital patients were either infected or colonized with MRSA. This rate is between eight to 11 times greater than previous MRSA estimates.

The ease of creating new anti-infective compounds and their resulting potency are derived from Centrose's proprietary methods of attaching sugars to specific locations on existing antibiotic "scaffolds." Sugars play a critical role in the regulation of drug activity in the body. The technology, patented by the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation and licensed exclusively to Centrose, has continued to demonstrate its ability to improve drug activity and potency.

"We are aggressively pursuing commercial applications of this technology," said James Prudent, Ph.D., chief executive officer of Centrose. "Centrose's breakthrough chemistries are just as profound with anti-cancer compounds as they are with anti-infectives, giving Centrose broad product capabilities."

### **About Centrose**

Centrose, a Madison, Wis.-based biopharmaceutical company, is applying scientific breakthroughs in sugar chemistry to the discovery, development and commercialization of small molecule therapeutics. Centrose delivers commercially relevant technology for the attachment of any sugar molecule to any compound. Sugars are critical to the regulation of biological processes and pathways in the human body, and play fundamental roles in drug action. Naturally derived

drugs such as erythromycin, a commonly used antibiotic, that contain sugar molecules have been found to be inactive after the sugars were removed and enhanced in activity when new sugars were added. Centrose owns exclusive chemistry that will allow it's chemists to exploit the power of sugar chemistry in much the same way that nature does. Recent data suggests that new drugs containing sugar attachments will find their way to market more quickly, since fewer failures are expected. Centrose owns a broad set of patents and patent applications issued and filed by the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation.

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