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Science Center's QED Program Makes Second Round of Awards
To Life Sciences Researchers

PHILADELPHIA--(May 12, 2010) – Technologies to advance heart disease treatment and gene therapy received awards from the University City Science Center's QED Proof-of-Concept Program in May. Three researchers from The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Penn Medicine and Rutgers University will each receive \$100,000 from the Science Center, a \$100,000 match from their supporting institution, and business advice for one year.

This is the second round of awards by the QED Program, the first multi-institutional proof-of-concept program for life science technologies in the U.S. Awards are made to bridge the "valley of death" -- the gap between research grants and commercial seed investment, by awarding grants to life science technologies with high potential in the healthcare industry.

Robert J. Levy, MD, Professor of Pediatrics & Pharmacology at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia developed a technology that is expected to significantly reduce the 100,000 surgeries performed each year in the U.S. to replace blocked stents. Peripheral Arterial Disease (PAD) is a common disease caused by blockage of blood vessels in the arms or legs. It is currently treated by the insertion of a metal stent that re-opens the blocked vessel. However, most stents typically become re-blocked over time. The proposed technology, Vascular Magnetic Intervention, uses magnetically-charged nanoparticles to deliver circulation-preserving drugs to implanted stents. Dr. Levy's proposal was supported by Business Advisor Richard Woodward.

A group at Penn Medicine headed by Associate Professor of Surgery Joseph H. Gorman III, MD, is developing a minimally invasive technique for replacing damaged heart valves. The novel valve replacement uses a specially designed folding, anchoring, and sealing mechanism that enables it to be introduced through a peripheral blood vessel and placed in the heart without the need for cardiopulmonary bypass. Its development will make heart-valve replacement possible for 10 times as many patients, most of whom are too sick to tolerate the surgical procedure in use today. Dr. Gorman's proposal was supported by Business Advisor David Owens.

The U1 Adaptor technology being developed by Samuel I. Gunderson, Ph.D.'s team at Rutgers University is a brand-new method for silencing genes that works via a completely different mechanism to current techniques. To date, gene "silencing" has been dominated by only a few technologies that are associated with problems of delivery, stability, and immune reactivity. The ability to "switch off" genes in living cells and organisms is indispensable in the discovery of gene functions, and has been increasingly recognized as a viable therapeutic option for many genetic diseases. Dr. Gunderson's proposal was supported by Business Advisor Jim Ballance.

"These technologies represent innovative solutions to perplexing programs. By adding business advice to the mix, we are helping these researchers accelerate their journey to the marketplace," says Stephen S. Tang, Ph.D., president and CEO of the Science Center. "Anytime we can help pull technologies out of the labs and into the marketplace it's a win-win – for the researcher, potential beneficiaries and Greater Philadelphia's life sciences sector."

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“We were thrilled to see Rutgers University included in the list of QED Program awardees,” says Maxine Ballen, President & CEO of the New Jersey Technology Council. “This is a great example of regional cooperation that transcends city and state boundaries – and makes the technology sector in our region even stronger.”

The RFP for the second round of the QED Program generated 61 responses when it was sent to 16 universities and research institutions in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware in October 2009 (Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, Delaware State University, Drexel University, Fox Chase Cancer Center, Lankenau Institute for Medical Research, Lehigh University, Monell Chemical Senses Center, Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, Rutgers University, Temple University, Thomas Jefferson University, University of Delaware, University of Pennsylvania, University of the Sciences in Philadelphia, Widener University and The Wistar Institute).

A team comprised of regional industry representatives and investors reviewed the white papers and narrowed the proposals down to 10 projects in December. The 10 applying scientists were paired with business advisors as they worked on both the research projects and a business case to support them. In late April, the researchers presented to the selection team, which ultimately selected three projects. To view the complete list of selection team members and business advisors, go to <http://www.sciencecenter.org/qed-market-representation>.

The QED Program (from the Latin “*Quod Erat Demonstrandum*” – “that which is demonstrated”) integrates four elements that are critical to successfully and efficiently performing early-stage proof-of-concept technology assessments: grant funding, business advice, market drivers and guidance to exit. The program was launched in April 2009.

A third RFP will be released in June 2010.

About the Science Center

The University City Science Center accelerates technology commercialization, regional economic development, and the market availability of life-enhancing scientific breakthroughs by bringing together innovations, scientists, entrepreneurs, funding, laboratory facilities, and business services. Established in 1963 and headquartered in Philadelphia, PA, the Science Center was the first, and remains the largest, urban research park in the United States. Graduate organizations and current residents of the University City Science Center’s Port business incubators have created more than 15,000 jobs that remain in the Greater Philadelphia region today and contribute more than \$9 billion to the regional economy annually. For more information about the Science Center, go to www.sciencecenter.org.

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