



## **Elixir Pharmaceuticals Presents Ghrelin Antagonist Program at European Conference on Aging**

**Cambridge, Mass. – November 30, 2006** – Elixir Pharmaceuticals, Inc., announced today the Company's Chief Scientific Officer, Peter DiStefano, PhD, presented data from its ghrelin antagonist program during the European Conference on Aging held this week in Innsbruck, Austria. Elixir is focused on the development of drugs to treat and prevent metabolic disease, as well as prevent age-related diseases, based on targets identified in the pathways regulating aging. Dr. DiStefano and colleagues, Drs. Rory Curtis and Bard J. Geesaman, have previously authored an extensive review article, titled "Aging and Metabolism: Drug Discovery Opportunities", which was published in *Nature Reviews Drug Discovery* (July 2005, Vol. 4, No. 7).

Ghrelin is a key metabolic regulator that is known to stimulate appetite and food consumption, and is believed to play a key role in metabolism and energy storage. Ghrelin is a naturally-occurring hormone secreted by the stomach which acts primarily at the level of the hypothalamus in the brain.

Dr. DiStefano stated, "Ghrelin is a central player in the complex pathway regulating human metabolic function, a pathway inextricably linked to those regulating aging. We have now shown that our oral small molecule lead compound binds selectively to the ghrelin receptor, decreases body weight and reduces both fasting glucose levels and insulin resistance in an animal model of obesity. Our data clearly demonstrate the ability of a ghrelin antagonist to improve glycemic control utilizing less insulin, and these data recapitulate previous findings generated in a mouse obesity model in which the ghrelin receptor has been knocked out. This gives us tremendous confidence that pharmacological inhibition of ghrelin signaling could play an important role in the treatment of metabolic diseases such as diabetes and obesity, diseases whose risks increase with age."

William K. Heiden, Elixir's President and Chief Executive Officer, commented, "We are enthusiastic about the results seen in these animal models of metabolic disease and by the rapid progress being made by our scientists on the ghrelin antagonist program. We are now in the lead optimization stage and expect to begin IND-enabling studies over the next six to nine months. The Company's goal is to file the IND for this program in 2008 to be followed by human clinical trials in patients with Type 2 diabetes and obesity."

Amongst metabolic diseases, diabetes and obesity are currently at epidemic proportions in the U.S. and represent an enormous unmet medical need. According to the International Diabetes Federation, Type 2 diabetes affects 195 million people worldwide and the number of sufferers could top 330 million by 2025.

Elixir has filed broad intellectual property protection on all aspects of the ghrelin antagonist program including composition of matter protection covering five novel compound classes.

## **About Elixir Pharmaceuticals**

Elixir is a Cambridge, MA-based biopharmaceutical company focused on developing and commercializing drugs to treat and prevent metabolic disease, prevent age-related diseases, extending the quality and length of human life.

In addition to its ghrelin antagonist program, the Company has leveraged its knowledge of ghrelin biology and pharmacology by licensing a small molecule ghrelin agonist (designated EX-1314) from Bristol-Myers Squibb Company in April 2005. EX-1314 binds selectively to the ghrelin receptor and mimics the body's naturally occurring ghrelin. In doing so this novel, orally available agent is capable of stimulating appetite, gastric motility and the release of growth hormone. Elixir is currently in IND-enabling studies with EX-1314 for a variety of therapeutic indications.

Further, in March 2006, Elixir in-licensed North and South American rights to Glufast<sup>®</sup> (mitiglinide calcium hydrate), an insulin secretagogue, which lowers post-meal glucose levels by improving the body's own ability to produce insulin. Already marketed in Japan, Glufast has undergone extensive clinical development demonstrating the product's ability to safely and effectively treat Type 2 diabetes.

Elixir has also developed expertise and a broad IP portfolio of more than twenty patents and patent applications related to the Sirtuin class of compounds, including SIRT1 activators and inhibitors. The Company's own R&D efforts and those of its numerous research partners utilizing modulators of SIRT1 (a human sirtuin) have significantly extended the SIRT knowledge base in recent years. Elixir is also actively pursuing drug discovery efforts focused on other key targets, such as AMP-activated kinase (AMPK) and the INDY gene, both of which have been implicated in the regulation of aging and metabolism in a variety of organisms.

More information about Elixir is available at <http://www.elixirpharm.com/>

**CONTACT:** William Heiden of Elixir Pharmaceuticals, (617) 995-7000; or Media, Justin Jackson, [jjackson@burnsmc.com](mailto:jjackson@burnsmc.com), or Jason Farber, [jfarber@burnsmc.com](mailto:jfarber@burnsmc.com), or Investors, Juliane Snowden, [jsnowden-andrew@burnsmc.com](mailto:jsnowden-andrew@burnsmc.com), or Nicki Kahner, [nkahner@burnsmc.com](mailto:nkahner@burnsmc.com), all of Burns McClellan, (212) 213-0006, for Elixir Pharmaceuticals.