



Press Release

31 March 2008

Mercury Therapeutics, Inc.

- *Patents filed on lead compounds that directly and specifically activate AMPK*

WOBURN, Massachusetts, March 31 - Mercury Therapeutics, Inc. (MTI), a company that discovers and develops orally active protein kinase targeted drugs, announces that it has filed for patent protection on three lead compounds that directly and specifically activate AMP activated protein kinase (AMPK).

The compounds are strong candidates for further development in relation to the treatment of Type-2 Diabetes and the Metabolic Syndrome, where AMPK activation is considered to be a key therapeutic target. MTI's lead compounds bind to a sub-unit of AMPK that is unique among human protein kinases.

The three lead compounds have been tested in obese mice, maintained on a high fat diet, which displayed elevated fasting blood glucose levels and a sluggish response in a glucose tolerance test (GTT). The statistically significant test results ($p < 0.05$) showed a lowering of fasting blood glucose levels and improved performance in a GTT, without any apparent adverse effects.

MTI's proprietary integrated AMPK discovery platform technology has been central to identifying novel chemical scaffolds that have resulted in identifying multiple AMPK activators and inhibitors, and it is continuing to produce additional active molecules.

MTI will be presenting pre-clinical data in relation to Type-2 Diabetes and Metabolic Syndrome at the Spring BIO-Europe Conference in Madrid during April 7-9, 2008.

Neal C. Birnberg, Ph.D., Mercury Therapeutics' President and CEO, said: "MTI's program to develop an orally available AMPK activator has the potential to re-write the rules of how Type-2 Diabetes is managed. The mechanism of action through which AMPK normalizes metabolism will also create markets to treat the pre-diabetic state known as Impaired Glucose Tolerance, as well as the Metabolic Syndrome. With a continuation of the rapid progress MTI has made in the design and synthesis of novel AMPK activators, I am optimistic that we will be filing an IND by the end of 2009 to initiate clinical trials focusing on Type-2 diabetics who no longer respond to metformin or other available oral therapies."

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About Mercury Therapeutics, Inc. (www.mtipharm.com)

MTI is an early stage drug discovery company focusing on the development of small molecule candidates against a number of selected protein kinase drug targets in metabolic diseases and oncology. MTI's main focus is on the discovery and development of orally active small molecule activators of AMPK, a well-validated though largely unexploited, protein kinase drug target in metabolic disease. While a number of anti-diabetic drugs currently on the market, including metformin (Glucophage®) and pioglitazone (Actos®), act indirectly to activate AMPK, MTI is seeking to develop the first orally available direct AMPK activator. The potential indications of a successful AMPK targeted drug include Type-2 diabetes, hyperlipidemia, obesity, metabolic syndrome and endocrine cancers.

MTI was launched in 2001, and has an exclusive license to a patent from Dartmouth College and St. Vincent's Institute for Biomedical Research in Melbourne, Australia for AMP activated protein kinase (AMPK). In June 2001, MTI launched its R&D operations following execution of a collaboration agreement with Aventis, AG to develop AMPK activators to treat Type-2 diabetes and obesity. In June 2004, Aventis was acquired by Sanofi, and MTI re-acquired all of its intellectual property rights to AMP kinase as well as the rights to develop compounds identified during the collaboration. In October, 2004: MTI secured external financing from XL TechGroup, Inc. In Q4 2005, MTI demonstrated its first preclinical proof-of-principle of active compounds in a glucose tolerance test in mice.