

## **Asterand Announces Collaboration with Rubicon Genomics to Develop New Cancer Diagnostics Tests**

**Detroit, MI, June 27, 2006**

Asterand plc (LSE: ATD), the human tissue research services company, announces today that it has signed a partnership with Rubicon Genomics to discover novel biomarkers for cancer diagnosis.

Under the non-exclusive agreement, Asterand will supply tissue and biofluid samples from its biorepository and its worldwide network of clinical collaborators. Rubicon will perform retrospective and prospective studies with the samples using its proprietary MethylPlex™ technology to discover more sensitive and specific methylated DNA markers for cancer diagnosis and prognosis.

DNA methylation is an important mechanism by which cells become cancerous and grow out of control. Several recent studies have shown that specific methylated DNA sequences can be detected in the blood of various cancer patients. Thus, these modified DNAs can be sensitive markers for the presence of cancer.

“The current tests to detect cancer are often not sufficiently sensitive to detect cancer at an early stage”, says Asterand’s Chief Scientific Officer Dr. James Eliason. “This partnership will help Rubicon develop tests for detecting cancer sooner, in turn leading to more effective treatment.”

Over the last several years Asterand has built a large bank of samples and biofluids together with associated data. This bank is now widely used by the world’s large pharmaceutical companies in their research programs. Under the agreement with Rubicon, Asterand will provide broad access to their biobank and research services in exchange for a royalty on diagnostic tests that are developed and marketed.

“This is an ideal area for our companies to collaborate,” says Asterand’s Dr. Eliason. “Our extensive sample collection and expertise in sample characterization and annotation, combined with Rubicon’s technology for highly sensitive detection of methylated DNA sequences will open up exciting discoveries in cancer detection and treatment.”

“Collaborating with Asterand will allow us to accelerate development of our diagnostic products,” adds Dr. John Langmore, Rubicon’s Vice President for Commercial Development. “Their samples and clinical data are critical to Rubicon’s success in developing superior tests that can fully exploit Rubicon’s breakthrough methods of detecting methylated DNA in routine samples of blood and urine. We look forward to developing more effective tests for detection and prognosis of colon, lung and breast cancer.”

Enquiries

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