THE MICHAEL J. FOX FOUNDATION FOR PARKINSON'S RESEARCH

MJFF PRESS RELEASES

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Foundation to Provide Up to $3.1 Million for Development of New Therapy to Stop Parkinson's Progression

The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research (MJFF) today announced that it would provide up to $3.1 million over three years to a team led by ProteoTech Inc. (Kirkland, WA) to develop a treatment for Parkinson's that can disrupt or inhibit clumping of the protein alpha-synuclein. This clumping is associated with the loss of dopamine-producing cells in the brains of people with PD. The researchers theorize that blocking this protein clumping could prevent further cell loss and stop Parkinson's disease progression. Compounds already shown by ProteoTech to be effective in the test tube will be tested in cellular and animal models of Parkinson's disease. By the end of three years, the team's goal is to identify a compound and perform the preclinical testing needed to file an application with the FDA for a Phase I clinical trial.

"Researchers have focused a great deal of attention on alpha-synuclein, but many questions about its role in Parkinson's remain unresolved," said Deborah W. Brooks, MJFF president and CEO. "A chief goal of this project is to move the debate out of the lab and into the clinic. And if successful, the work could speed the discovery of a groundbreaking therapy to slow or stop the progression of Parkinson's disease."

Many neurodegenerative diseases share the trait of clumping of various proteins, although there is considerable debate over whether the protein clumps in PD are a cause or effect, damaging or protective. This project provides a way to potentially leapfrog over the current harmful/helpful debate about alpha-synuclein by testing the hypothesis that protein clumps in Parkinson's are harmful through the development of a therapy to disrupt and prevent their formation.

The project leverages ProteoTech's prior experience with protein clumping in Alzheimer's disease. In the past five years ProteoTech has developed a small molecule compound, Exebryl?-1, that in preclinical testing has been shown to markedly reduce brain beta-amyloid deposits in animal models of Alzheimer's disease, as well as to result in notable improvements in and reversal of memory impairments in these animals.

"We're excited that The Michael J. Fox Foundation has recognized our work in Alzheimer's as a significant base to build on in Parkinson's disease," said Alan D. Snow, PhD, president and chief scientific officer of ProteoTech. "We look forward to working with a stellar team of researchers to develop a disease-modifying small molecule therapeutic that we anticipate will help slow or even reverse the progression of Parkinson's disease."

The award is made under the Foundation's LEAPS (Linked Efforts to Accelerate Parkinson's Solutions) initiative. LEAPS are multi-year, multi-million, multi-disciplinary projects to address questions that will have significant practical impact on the understanding and treatment of Parkinson's disease. MJFF has funded approximately $13.2 million under this initiative to date.

The project team, coordinated by Dr. Snow, also includes:

--Eliezer Masliah, MD, professor, neurosciences and pathology, University of California, San Diego
--Benjamin Wolozin, MD, PhD, professor of pharmacology, Boston University
--Daniel Kirschner, PhD, professor of biology, Boston College
--Manfred Weigele, PhD, chemist and consultant, co-founder of Ariad Pharmaceuticals and former director of chemistry/research, Hoffman-La Roche Inc.
--Anil Kumar, PhD, CEO and lead chemist, MedChem Source, LLP

About ProteoTech Inc.

ProteoTech Inc. is a world leader in research and development of new therapeutics derived from proteoglycan and amyloid technologies for the treatment of major human diseases. ProteoTech is developing disease-modifying therapeutics for Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, type 2 diabetes, and systemic amyloidosis. ProteoTech, a 1996 spin-off from University of Washington technologies has been successful in discovering three proprietary classes of compounds that inhibit and disrupt the amyloid fibril process, which include (1) small molecule compounds and synthetic analogs (including NCE's), (2) small peptides and mimetics, and (3) glycosaminoglycan/ carbohydrate therapeutics.

About The Michael J. Fox Foundation

Founded in 2000, The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research is dedicated to ensuring the development of a cure for Parkinson's disease within this decade through an aggressively funded research agenda. To date, The Foundation has funded approximately $63 million in research aimed at finding a cure for the disease, either directly or through partnerships.