Hemex Health

4640 S.W. Macadam Avenue ♦ Suite 250 ♦ Portland, OR 97239 ♦ 503-703-7696 ♦ p.white@hemexhealth.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hemex Health Receives Phase II Grant from National Institutes of Health

NIH Funds Will Aid Commercialization of Malaria Diagnostic

PORTLAND, OREGON – April. 24, 2017 – Hemex Health, an early stage diagnostics company located in Portland, Oregon, has been awarded a $1.5M Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Direct to Phase II grant by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The grant was awarded to Hemex to help them commercialize technology for a highly-sensitive, one-minute, portable diagnostic for malaria elimination.

Hemex Health specializes in developing lab-quality, point-of-care diagnostics for the developing world. Its initial releases will be diagnostics for malaria and sickle cell, two diseases that have received increased attention from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and governments in disease-affected countries. The SBIR Program is a congressionally-authorized program for domestic small businesses with the objective of encouraging technological innovation.

Hemex licensed the malaria technology (code-named "MOD" for "magneto-optical detection") from Case Western Reserve University (CWRU), a leading global health center. The inventor, Dr. Brian Grimberg, Assistant Professor of Infectious Diseases and Immunology (and a Hemex employee) was moved to develop MOD after watching his microscopists in the jungles of Papua New Guinea. He noted the health professionals struggled to read one slide an hour, while 30 children waited in line. "I wondered if we could make a faster diagnostic by exploiting hemozoin, a paramagnetic by-product of all malaria infections," said Dr. Grimberg. "Working with colleagues at Case Western, we came up with the first version of MOD using a laser and magnet to detect (malaria-related) hemozoin in blood samples," he said.

Early field studies funded by a Phase I grant from NCAI have borne out Dr. Grimberg's theory. MOD is able to detect all strains of malaria, even at low levels, in about a minute.

"It's critical for countries trying to eliminate malaria to find every instance of the disease, even asymptomatic carriers," said Patti White, CEO of Hemex. "We also need to make sure the total solution will meet the needs of malaria-affected regions that are often overwhelmed during epidemics. That means the diagnostic must be fast, affordable, and rugged enough to take into the most challenging environments." Ms. White said the Hemex founders have decades of experience in commercializing products for the developing world. The company plans to offer MOD at a price of about $1/test, including the amortized cost of the portable reader.

Peter Galen, Hemex's Chief Innovation Officer and Principal Investigator for the grant, said the SBIR funds would be used primarily to further develop and ruggedize the diagnostic reader, but also to expand existing studies in Kenya, Peru, and India. "We've tested MOD on hundreds of samples," said Mr. Galen, "now we will expand that to thousands."

“We are honored to be a recipient of this award, which will help us in our mission to provide life-changing diagnostics to the entire world,” said Patti White. “Malaria and sickle cell disease can be effectively treated with cost-effective interventions, but it all starts with early, accurate diagnosis.”

About Hemex Health

Hemex Health develops and commercializes technologies that help make affordable life-sustaining medical care possible for people everywhere, no matter how underserved or remote their region. Hemex products are designed to be easy to use and provide benefit quickly and effectively for the healthcare worker and patient at the point-of-need. The company’s leaders, with backgrounds in international business and biomedical engineering, have decades of success in developing and delivering scores of products that have made a difference in people’s lives. Backed by the leadership’s extensive experience in medical technology success, Hemex’s business focus is on targeting global locations with elimination goals for malaria, and serving the large, populations at risk for sickle cell in the developing world, where few in need are currently tested. More information can be found by going to www.hemexhealth.com .

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CONTACT:

Patti White, CEO

Hemex Health

503.703.7696 p.white@hemexhealth.com