



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SignaBlok Awarded SBIR Grant from NHLBI/NIH to Develop New Nanotechnology for Diagnostic Imaging of Atherosclerosis

Shrewsbury, MA, July 10, 2012 – SignaBlok, Inc., a Massachusetts-based emerging biopharmaceutical company, announced today the award of a Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) grant by the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI), a division of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). This project, entitled “Multifunctional nanoformulations for diagnostic imaging of atherosclerosis”, will explore the use of SignaBlok’s targeted nanoparticles as a safe and efficient delivery platform for imaging of the most dangerous type of arterial plaques – called unstable (vulnerable) plaques – in early diagnosis and treatment of atherosclerosis. Research will be conducted in conjunction with the Advanced Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) Center at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, Worcester.

SignaBlok’s proprietary nanosystem for delivery of drugs and imaging agents targets macrophages, inflammatory cells that are critically involved in plaque formation and have a high discriminatory power to identify the vulnerable plaque. The goal of this grant is to validate a novel approach to macrophage-targeted delivery of MRI contrast agents in a clinically relevant animal model of atherosclerosis.

“We are extremely pleased by the award of this SBIR grant from the NHLBI/NIH,” said Alexander Sigalov, Ph.D., President, Inventor and Founder of SignaBlok. “The proposed research will result in the development of novel imaging techniques that would fill an important unmet medical need in the diagnosis and treatment of atherosclerosis. This would offer better way to identify high-risk individuals, provide earlier diagnosis before symptoms occur and monitor treatment effects.”

“Macrophages are important imaging targets for diagnosis and image-guided therapy of not only atherosclerosis but also cancer. Thus, this grant gives us an opportunity to develop targeted nanosystem for in vivo macrophage imaging with a wide range of clinical applications,” said Alexander Sigalov.

About atherosclerosis: Atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries) is the major cause of cardiovascular disease, the number one leading cause of death worldwide. There are two broad categories of atherosclerotic plaques: stable and unstable (also called vulnerable). A vast majority of cardiovascular events such as stroke or myocardial infarction result from rupture or erosion of vulnerable plaques. Accurate in vivo tracking of plaque vulnerability and progression using non-invasive imaging approaches allows early identification of high-risk patients as well as facilitates early intervention decision-making process and monitoring of the effectiveness of interventions.

About SignaBlok

SignaBlok is developing a new class of therapies – SCHOOL peptides, the innovative modulatory peptides that can be rationally designed for nearly any cell surface receptor and have broad potential to treat and prevent a wide range of serious diseases with unmet clinical needs. SignaBlok is also developing a nanotechnology that enables targeted delivery of SCHOOL peptides and other therapies and/or imaging agents, aiming to improve efficacy, reduce dose, and allow image-guided therapy. Additional information about SignaBlok is available at www.signablok.com.

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