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Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy Awards Over $40,000 Grant to SomaLogic Study

Hackensack, NJ – April 29, 2011 – Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy (PPMD) is excited to announce funding to a three-way agreement with SomaLogic, Inc. in Boulder, CO, and Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center (Cincinnati Children’s) to use SomaLogic’s proprietary screening technology to identify biomarkers for Duchenne muscular dystrophy (Duchenne).

“Biomarkers” are proteins or other molecules in the body that can be measured to provide information about disease state or disease progression. They can be used in diagnostics or to determine if an experimental therapy is having an effect on the condition it's being used to treat. A biomarker that is known to reliably provide this type of information can accelerate the time it takes to conduct a clinical study and approve new drugs. In addition, good biomarkers may also lead directly to the identification of new therapeutic targets.

To identify biomarkers for Duchenne, SomaLogic and Cincinnati Children’s will test blood samples from 60 boys with Duchenne—half who are using the steroid prednisone and half who are not—and 30 matched healthy boys as controls. SomaLogic uses a technology based on “SOMAmers”—small pieces of modified DNA that bind to specific proteins. By using a mixture of many different SOMAmers with unique sequences, SomaLogic can identify combination of proteins in blood serum that are indicative of disease state, even in its earliest stages.

SomaLogic should be thanked for initiating this project with PPMD and conducting the study at cost. The grant from PPMD will fund the direct costs of processing and analyzing the samples at SomaLogic and the cost of sample collection by Cincinnati Children’s.

PPMD President and CEO Pat Furlong believes this project will open a lot of doors to Duchenne research. “By identifying specific biomarkers for Duchenne, SomaLogic will allow earlier and more accurate disease diagnosis. These biomarkers, we believe, will also enhance monitoring for therapeutic effect in treatment trials and potentially yield new targets for drug development. It is great to have the SomaLogic team and Cincinnati Children’s working together with us to take Duchenne research to the next level.”

“The acute need to reduce the devastating toll of Duchenne muscular dystrophy is a primary example of why we have developed this uniquely powerful technology, and we are thrilled to work with our colleagues at PPMD and Cincinnati Children’s to apply it for the good of patients and their families,” said Stephen A. Williams, M.D., Ph.D, SomaLogic’s Chief Medical Officer. “We believe that our collaboration will find not only good diagnostic biomarkers for Duchenne, but may also uncover potential new and effective therapeutic targets.”
Please visit Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy’s what we are funding webpage for more information, or ParentProjectMD.org/Research for complete coverage of our research investments.

**About Duchenne muscular dystrophy**

Duchenne, the most common form of childhood muscular dystrophy, is a progressive and fatal muscle disorder affecting boys and young men that causes the loss of muscle function, wheelchair dependency and a decline in respiratory and cardiac function.

**About Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy**

Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy (PPMD) is a national not-for-profit organization founded in 1994 by parents of children with Duchenne and Becker muscular dystrophy. Our mission is to end Duchenne. We accelerate research, raise our voices in Washington, demand optimal care for all young men, and educate the global community. PPMD is headquartered in Middletown, Ohio with offices in Fort Lee, New Jersey. For more information, visit www.parentprojectmd.org.

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