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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Akonni Awarded $300K Grant from National Institutes of Health to Develop RT-PCR Microarray for Detecting Viruses in Human CSF

Multiplex approach to simplify and speed testing for viral encephalitis and meningitis

FREDERICK, MD – August 4, 2011 – Akonni Biosystems, a molecular diagnostics company that develops novel nucleic acid extraction and microarray-based testing systems designed to rapidly and economically analyze biological samples, today announced receipt of a $300K grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The award will enable Akonni to accelerate the research and development of a closed amplicon RT-PCR microarray for the detection of enterovirus, herpes viruses (HSV-1, HSV-2, VZV, CMV, HHV-6) and West Nile virus in cerebral spinal fluid (CSF). Collaborating with Akonni Biosystems on this project will be the Laboratory of Viral Diseases at the Wadsworth Center of Albany, New York.

Encephalitis and meningitis are potentially fatal diseases defined by acute inflammation of the brain or protective membranes covering the brain and spinal cord, and are often caused by viruses, bacteria, fungi, or parasites. The potential for, and nature of, medical complications arising from CSF infection vary with the causative organism, as does the choice of appropriate treatment. Rapid and accurate identification of viral nucleic acid in the CSF of a patient with encephalitis or meningitis can help direct therapy and minimize morbidity and mortality.

Nucleic acid amplification and detection assays have been considered the tests of choice for viral CSF infections for more than a decade. This project will further study, develop, and test a "closed amplicon" gel element RT-PCR microarray and contribute to the development of more rapid, affordable and comprehensive methods for diagnosing viral encephalitis and meningitis.

"The development of rapid, low cost, molecular diagnostic tests for use in near point-of-care settings has the potential to change the way CSF infections are identified," states Kevin Banks, Ph.D., Vice President of Sales and Marketing at Akonni Biosystems. "Combining RT-PCR with our proprietary gel-drop microarray platform in a self-contained micro-fluidic chamber will further enhance our ability to develop and deploy multi-test panels to affordably and rapidly detect viruses, bacteria, fungi and parasites in a single patient sample."

For more information about Akonni Biosystems and its novel ultra-rapid nucleic acid extraction technology and microarray-based testing systems, visit www.akonni.com.

About Akonni Biosystems

Akonni Biosystems was founded in 2003 and has over 15 patents owned or exclusively licensed with more than three dozen others pending. The company's core technology is based on work developed at Argonne National Laboratory and the Engelhardt Institute of Molecular Biology and utilizes gel-drop array technologies optimized for medical applications. Supported by a series of government grants and contracts from NIH, CDC, DOE, DOD, NIJ, and NSF, the company has significantly advanced the original technology by improving the system's capabilities from sample preparation to final result. Commercial products and products in its near-term pipeline include rapid sample preparation methodologies for nucleic acid extraction and multiplex panel assays for detecting multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB), upper respiratory infections, viral encephalitis, and hospital-acquired infections (MRSA).

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