

June 19, 2008



UWM Research Foundation licenses compounds to MPP Group for alcohol addiction

MILWAUKEE – The University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee Research Foundation (UWMRF) and MPP Group, LLC, announced the completion of a license agreement for a series of novel compounds that may be useful in the treatment and control of alcohol addiction.

The family of compounds licensed by MPP Group LLC, a Wauwatosa-based biopharma company, appears to interact with certain neurotransmitters in the brain to block the euphoric effects of alcohol without inducing anxiety or sedation. The compounds, developed by James Cook, UWM Distinguished Professor of Chemistry, also may be useful in treating other addictive behaviors or disorders.

MPP Group and its partners and collaborators will develop the compounds to produce an FDA-approved therapeutic agent for the treatment of alcohol addiction, which affects about 17 million Americans.

Cook's research has led to the discovery of other potential therapeutic compounds, which may prove useful for the treatment of multiple diseases and disorders of the central nervous system. Several of these compounds have previously been licensed by pharmaceutical companies for new drug development.

“We are very excited to work with Dr. Cook, the UWM Chemistry and Biochemistry Department, and the UWM Research Foundation on this very promising technology,” said Frank Langley, president and CEO of MPP Group. “Alcohol addiction is a serious and disruptive problem for patients, their families, and society worldwide and we are optimistic that these compounds can be further developed into an effective drug to treat this and other potential addictions.”

The licensing deal has potential to provide sizable financial returns for UWM, said Brian Thompson, president of the UWM Research Foundation. The licensing revenue will be reinvested in future research, including the discovery and development of additional drug compounds by Cook, Thompson added.

“This license agreement is a perfect example of pairing good science from UWM with a strong commercial development partner who can move the technology forward in ways that will benefit health care as well as the local economy,” said Colin Scanes, UWM vice chancellor for research and economic development.

The UWM Research Foundation, Inc. is a nonprofit corporation which supports research and innovation at UWM through a variety of programs including patenting and licensing.

MPP Group, LLC, is a global pharmaceutical development organization which specializes in small molecule active pharmaceutical ingredients for a variety of medical conditions. The company has a number of compounds and products in its portfolio at various stages of development and preclinical activities. MPP Group is located in the Milwaukee County Research Park and also has a significant network of highly skilled and experienced domestic and international partners.

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