



**For Immediate Release**

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**LEADING HEALTHCARE COMPANIES JOIN IN MAJOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT  
EFFORT TO PREVENT HEART ATTACK AND STROKE**

*- High-risk plaque initiative studies atherosclerosis and the arterial lesions responsible for most serious forms of heart disease -*

**Waltham, MA - January 30, 2007** - BG Medicine (BGM) announced today that together with Merck & Co., AstraZeneca, Royal Philips Electronics and Humana it has formed the High-Risk Plaque (HRP) Initiative to research and advance the understanding, recognition and management of high-risk plaque, the primary underlying cause of heart attacks.

The HRP Initiative aims to collaborate on the discovery and development of improved techniques for identifying individuals at risk for heart attacks and the advancement of methods to monitor disease progression and response to treatment. The companies said the HRP Initiative will leverage recent advances in biology and technology to design and optimize a care-cycle for high-risk plaque. Its goal is to reduce morbidity, mortality and cost associated with cardiovascular disease.

High-risk plaque is associated with the number one cause of death in the Western world. Heart attacks were previously attributed to the build up of cholesterol deposits in the vessel wall of the heart in patients with high blood cholesterol. These deposits were believed to cause a gradual narrowing of the coronary arteries and eventually, blockage. Pathologists have reported for decades that many patients who died of heart attacks had only minor build up and no narrowing of the coronary arteries; instead, a quickly forming thrombus (blood clot) had formed over a disrupted plaque and blocked the artery.

Looking for an explanation of this phenomenon researchers have reported over the past five years that in addition to cholesterol deposits plaque in the coronary and carotid arteries also showed inflammation. The inflamed plaque can suddenly rupture and cause thrombosis. Such plaques are today known as high-risk or vulnerable plaques. This rupture of a high-risk plaque in a coronary artery without flow obstruction explains why 70-85 percent of heart attacks occur in people who were without any pre-existing complaints and presumed healthy.

Valentin Fuster, M.D., Ph.D., chairman of the Scientific Advisory Board for the HRP Initiative commented, "The HRP Initiative is expected to make important contributions to the development of a cost-effective care-cycle for this common condition that is responsible for much suffering, disability

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and death in the world. The HRP Initiative covers a broad spectrum of pertinent issues, from molecular markers to the role of lifestyle interventions.” Dr. Fuster is a leading international cardiologist who serves as director of the Zena and Michael A. Weiner Cardiovascular Institute and the Marie-Josée and Henry R. Kravis Center for Cardiovascular Health and Director of Mount Sinai Heart.

Erling Falk, M.D., Ph.D., a prominent cardiovascular pathologist who co-chairs the Scientific Advisory Board for the HRP Initiative added, “Coming together under the umbrella of the HRP Initiative to work collaboratively to move research and development of this important disease forward will improve diagnosis and treatment of patients at high risk for serious cardiovascular disease.” Dr. Falk is professor of Cardiovascular Pathology, Department of Cardiology, University of Aarhus, Aarhus, Denmark.

The HRP Initiative expects to provide a total of US\$30 million in funding over four years and will include a total of six sponsoring companies. Merck & Co., AstraZeneca and Royal Philips Electronics are the first three companies that have committed to sponsor the initiative. This collaboration also involves Humana, one of the largest publicly traded health benefits companies in the U.S., and reflects the creative real-world ways that the HRP Initiative hopes to work. Involving all members of the care-cycle in this research initiative is novel and crucial to the overall success. BG Medicine, a biotechnology research company based in Waltham, Massachusetts, serves as the project coordinator.

“This is an exciting collaboration model with leading health care companies to jointly develop and fund a roadmap -- from laboratory science to clinical application, and the development and validation of molecular and imaging biomarkers for product development”, said Pieter Muntendam, M.D., president and chief executive officer of BG Medicine and member of the HRP Initiative Joint Steering Committee. “These joint research and development efforts are critical steps toward bringing forth important new detection and treatments to patients at high risk for cardiovascular disease.”

The HRP Initiative is governed by a Joint Steering Committee composed of representatives of each of the companies and a Scientific Program Board of the world’s foremost scientists and clinicians led by Drs. Fuster and Falk.

#### **About the HRP Initiative**

The High-Risk Plaque Initiative (“HRP Initiative”) is a joint research effort to advance the understanding, recognition and management of high-risk plaque for the benefit of vulnerable patients. High-risk, or vulnerable plaque, is the primary underlying cause of heart attack and stroke, which are two of the leading causes of death and disability in the Western world. There are currently no methods of screening, diagnosis or treatment for high-risk plaques. The pre-competitive HRP Initiative will build on recent advances in biology and technology to define a care-cycle for high-risk plaque (including screening, specific diagnosis, treatment decisions and follow-up), and with the aim of reducing morbidity, mortality and cost associated with cardiovascular disease. This Initiative, which comprises specific scientific studies and other activities, is being led by the world’s foremost scientists in the fields of cardiology, pathology, and imaging, and is made possible through funding by leading pharmaceutical and medical technology companies.

#### **About BG Medicine**

BG Medicine develops and operates the industry’s only integrated, high-throughput, research platform to measure and understand biological changes of drug and disease effects within intact systems. The company’s proprietary method of generating and integrating multiple analytical platform data

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including proteomics and metabolomics with powerful bioinformatics and computational analysis enables BG Medicine to discover and qualify biomarkers and characterize molecular mechanisms of action. BG Medicine applies its capabilities for third-party funded research and internal molecular diagnostic discovery. For more information about BG Medicine please visit [www.bg-medicine.com](http://www.bg-medicine.com).

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