

Essentialis, Inc. Appoints Richard C. Pasternak, MD, to its Board of Directors

Top Cardiologist Joins Board as DCCR Moves to New Development Stage

San Diego, CA, December 12, 2011 – Essentialis, Inc., announced today that Richard C. Pasternak, MD, retired recently as Vice President and Head of Global Scientific Affairs and Scientific Leadership at Merck & Co., Inc., has been appointed to its Board of Directors and will serve as lead scientific advisor, effective immediately. Essentialis is focused on the development of a breakthrough medicine for the treatment of cardiovascular and metabolic disease. Its lead compound, DCCR, is now in Phase IIb trials in patients with very high triglycerides.

“The Board made an excellent choice in selecting Dr. Pasternak to augment Essentialis clinical development expertise as DCCR development accelerates,” said Aaron Berg, President and Chief Executive Officer of Essentialis. “He is a renowned cardiologist, public health leader and scientist and we will benefit from his guidance in defining a focused and efficient development path resulting in a superior label through his clinical-study design and regulatory expertise.”

About Dr. Richard Pasternak

Dr. Richard C. Pasternak, a well-regarded cardiologist who has been a member of numerous lipid-guidelines committees, joined Merck Research Laboratories (MRL) in September 2004 where he helped to build the newly merged Cardiovascular/ Atherosclerosis clinical research department. His broader imprint on scientific achievement was recognized and from December of 2008 through June 2010 he held the position of Vice President, Head of Global Scientific Affairs and Scientific Leadership at Merck & Co. Inc. This position was tasked with strengthening Merck reputation and advancing public health through scientific leadership. In this role, his responsibilities included serving as a lead representative in external business, medical, and scientific alliances.

Dr. Pasternak also oversaw the Merck investigator-initiated studies program and the Global Medical and Scientific Publishing department, which produced more than 150 manuscripts and over 250 abstracts annually, and was responsible for overseeing the management of the Merck Manuals, Merck Index and Merck publication policies.

Prior to joining Merck, Dr. Pasternak was Director of Preventive Cardiology and Cardiac Rehabilitation at Massachusetts General Hospital, and an Associate Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School. Joining the Harvard faculty in 1983, he was Director of the Coronary Care Unit at Beth Israel Hospital, and later established a Section of Preventive Cardiology at Massachusetts General Hospital. He received his B.A. and M.D. from Yale University and completed his medical internship, residency training and cardiology fellowship at Massachusetts General Hospital.

Dr. Pasternak has also become an Independent Director on the Board of Cerenis Therapeutics, and joined the faculty of the Weill Cornell School of Medicine, in both the Department of Medicine and the Department of Public Health.

About DCCR

DCCR, is a proprietary crystalline salt of diazoxide in a controlled-release, once-a-day tablet formulation. It is in development for patients with very high triglycerides. Essentialis expects to initiate Phase 3 clinical trials in 2012. DCCR is covered by multiple issued US patents, which provide composition of matter protection until 2028. Essentialis has evaluated DCCR in several double-blind, placebo-controlled studies which demonstrated that the drug was well tolerated and statistical significance for various endpoints was achieved in patients with elevated triglycerides.. More than 100,000 patient-years of treatment with diazoxide help support the acceptable safety of DCCR.

About Essentialis, Inc.

Essentialis is a San Diego-headquartered pharmaceutical company focused on the development of breakthrough medicines targeted to the ATP-sensitive potassium channel, a metabolically regulated membrane protein whose modulation has potential to treat and prevent a wide range of cardiovascular and metabolic diseases. For more information visit <http://essentialistherapeutics.com/>

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