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## U.S. COMPOSITION-OF-MATTER PATENT SECURES MERRIMACK PHARMACEUTICALS' RIGHTS TO RECOMBINANT HUMAN ALPHA- FETOPROTEIN

**Cambridge, MA, February 26, 2002** - Merrimack Pharmaceuticals announced today that the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office has issued a composition-of-matter patent for recombinant human alpha-fetoprotein (rhAFP), to which Merrimack has the exclusive worldwide license. The patent titled, "Expression and Purification of Cloned Human Alpha-fetoprotein," issued as patent number US 6,331,611, covers methods of production, glycosylations, and fragments of the protein.

Merrimack has licensed the exclusive worldwide rights to the composition-of-matter patent from Martinex R&D, a subsidiary of McGill University. This is the fourth patent for rhAFP that Merrimack has secured through its licensing agreements emanating from the work of Dr. Robert A. Murgita, a professor of immunology at McGill University. The company also holds patents covering rhAFP's therapeutic use as an immunosuppressive agent and its methods of production.

ABI President and CEO Robert Mulroy said, "This patent solidifies Merrimack's intellectual property position on rhAFP. We believe that rhAFP has the potential to be an important treatment for certain autoimmune diseases."

Merrimack's lead product, ABI-001, is a recombinant version of human alpha-fetoprotein (AFP), a naturally occurring protein that has demonstrated potential as a safe, non-toxic immunosuppressive agent. AFP is a complex human serum protein that is produced by the fetal liver and yolk sac during pregnancy. AFP's primary biological function is to protect the developing embryo from a hostile attack by the mother's immune system. AFP accomplishes this task by entering the maternal circulation and selectively suppressing the mother's immune system. This selective immunomodulation endows ABI-001 with the potential to be both more effective and less toxic than existing therapeutic treatments for autoimmune diseases.

ABI-001 is preparing to enter Phase I clinical trials under an orphan-drug designation for the treatment of myasthenia gravis, an autoimmune disease of the voluntary muscles affecting 84,000 patients in the U.S. and Europe.

*Merrimack Pharmaceuticals, Inc., is a biotechnology company focused on the discovery and development of drugs for the treatment of immunological and autoimmune diseases, many of which have only limited or problematic therapeutic options. The company's proprietary "network biology" approach to drug discovery combines next-generation proteomic technologies with an informed biological perspective to evaluate the complex protein pathways and cellular processes that cause disease. Merrimack believes it can address many of the inefficiencies in current discovery approaches and improve drug-target validation, increase quality lead identification and speed the development of novel, effective and safe therapeutics. Merrimack is a privately held company based in Cambridge, Massachusetts. For additional information, please visit [www.MerrimackPharma.com](http://www.MerrimackPharma.com).*