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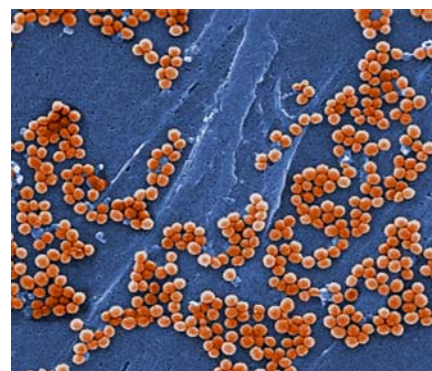
Karl von Gunten (919) 931-1434

karlvongunten@tranadiscovery.com

**TRANA DISCOVERY DEVELOPS ASSAY TO FIND NEW TREATMENTS
FOR STAPH INFECTIONS**

*Advancement of assay made possible through a \$250,000 loan awarded by the
North Carolina Biotechnology Center...*

CARY, NC (October 8, 2008) – Trana Discovery, Inc., a drug discovery technology company, today announced plans for the development of a new High-Throughput Screening (HTS) assay capable of selectively identifying compounds that inhibit the reproduction of *Staphylococcus aureus* bacteria through a unique mechanism of action: the target pathogen's ability to use transfer RNA (tRNA) in protein synthesis. Final development and commercialization of the assay is made possible by a \$250,000 Small Business Research Loan awarded to the company by the North Carolina Biotechnology Center. Trana will engage with several local biotechnology resources to advance the assay to HTS status, opening the way for the discovery, development, and market availability of critically needed new anti-infectives for the treatment of *Staphylococcus aureus* infections.



MRSA Bacteria – Credit: CDC

Staphylococcus aureus (staph) is becoming a major public health concern. A particular form of the bacteria, Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), has become resistant to most antibiotics. Staph infections can become serious or life threatening. Entirely different classes of antibiotics are likely to be necessary to overcome ongoing resistance issues that make these infections so difficult to treat.

The new staph assay is currently under early development and is designed to identify compounds that inhibit the essential use of tRNA^{Arg} by the bacteria. Initial experiments indicate that an assay that uses a fluorescein-labeled tRNA^{Arg} oligonucleotide as the tool and the *S. aureus* ribosome as the target is feasible and can be scaled to a high-throughput screening (HTS) format. The project is intended to advance this assay to full HTS functionality, rendering it immediately available and highly attractive for licensing to pharmaceutical companies.

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Development of the assay will engage the expertise of several biotechnology resources located in the Triangle. The current plan includes the Department of Microbiology at North Carolina State University who will perform the microbiological testing; RTI International will complete the cytotoxicity screening; and the Medicinal Chemistry division of the University of North Carolina School of Pharmacy will develop the molecular model(s). In addition, the High-Throughput Screening Center at Southern Research in Birmingham, AL will conduct the compound screening work following optimization of the assay and validation of the HTS format.

North Carolina has invested more than \$200 million in biotechnology infrastructure through the Biotechnology Center, including more than \$17 million awarded to more than 150 North Carolina startup biotechnology companies since 1989. The Small Business Research Loans support applied research projects critical to the development of technologies marked for commercialization.

"The Biotechnology Center has been and continues to be an excellent partner in our efforts to discover new classes of anti-infectives," said Steve Peterson, CEO of Trana Discovery. "Successful outcome of this project will validate the role of our technology as a drug discovery tool for new antibacterial agents, which in turn can be applied to virtually any other bacterial pathogen against which new treatments are needed."

The company expects to complete the *S. aureus* HTS project in approximately six months.

Trana recently perfected its high-throughput HIV drug discovery assay in a collaborative effort with Southern Research. The [Trana HIV 201 assay](#) is capable of identifying compounds that interfere with the use of tRNA by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), the cause of AIDS. Organizations interested in licensing the assay, which can screen up to 50,000 compounds per day, should contact Trana at info@tranadiscovery.com or by calling 866-390-3452 (toll free) or +1-919-342-6192.

About Trana Discovery, Inc.

Trana Discovery, a drug discovery technology company, helps its partners find novel classes of drugs for the treatment of serious viral, fungal and bacterial infectious diseases. The technology identifies compounds that work through a unique mechanism of action: the target pathogen's ability to use transfer RNA (tRNA) in protein synthesis or replication. The use of Trana Discovery technology can unlock the value – scientific, human, and financial – hidden in drug compound libraries, expedite the discovery of new drugs and provide opportunities for exclusive rights to new drug classes. Trana Discovery has licensed the core technology from discoveries made at North Carolina State University. The company is located in Cary, North Carolina. For more information, please visit www.tranadiscovery.com.

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