

PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Vital Therapies Initiates Liver Stabilization Trial

Pivotal ELAD Study in United States and Europe

San Diego, CA - October 1, 2009. Vital Therapies, Inc. (VTI), today announced that the first subject has been enrolled in a pivotal trial of its ELAD human cell-based liver assist system at California Pacific Medical Center (CPMC) in San Francisco. Todd Frederick, MD, Director of Liver Support Services, is the principal investigator for the trial at CPMC.

It is anticipated that up to 20 leading academic liver centers in the United States and Europe will take part in the SILVER (Stabilization In LiVER disease) study. The SILVER protocol allows for enrollment of patients with chronic liver disease who have recently suffered an acute event leading to moderate to severe liver failure, as measured by the Model for End Stage Liver Disease score (MELD). MELD score is widely accepted as an indicator of liver function.

The SILVER Trial is focusing on stabilization of liver disease so patients can either recover with their own liver intact or live long enough for a liver transplant. Liver transplantation is the only therapy proven to affect survival of liver failure patients. However the shortage of donor livers and the high cost of transplantation create a need either to support regeneration of the patient's own liver or to maintain sufficient liver function until a transplant organ becomes available. This study evaluates whether ELAD can provide this support.

For more details on the SILVER Trial, please go to www.clinicaltrials.gov

More than 120 patients have so far been treated with ELAD in six clinical trials in the United States, United Kingdom and China. An application for approval to market ELAD in China was filed in September 2007 after a pivotal clinical trial in China. This application is under review by China's SFDA.

VTI is also operating a compassionate use program with cost recovery in the United States, United Kingdom and Singapore.

About Vital Therapies, Inc. and ELAD®

Vital Therapies, Inc. (VTI) is a privately held, venture backed company, with cell culture facilities in San Diego, California and a wholly owned subsidiary in Beijing, China. VTI is developing the first human liver cell-based, ELAD, to stabilize liver function in patients with severe liver failure. During ELAD therapy the patient's plasma flows inside hollow fiber cartridges containing the cells, which process toxins and synthesize proteins and

metabolites that are key products of normal human liver function.VTI completed a pivotal trial and filed for market approval of ELAD in China in September 2007. ELAD is in investigational clinical trials in the United States and Europe.

For more information go to www.vitaltherapies.com

About California Pacific Medical Center

California Pacific Medical Center is one of the largest private, community based, not-for-profit, teaching medical centers in California and is a Sutter Health affiliate. It is a tertiary and quaternary referral center providing access to leading edge medicine while delivering the best possible personalized care. It provides a wide variety of services, including acute, post-acute and outpatient hospital care; hospice services; preventive and complementary care; and health education. Through its medical education program and research institute, physicians at California Pacific Medical Center are able to bring health care innovation to the bedside.

ELAD is a United States trademark of Vital Therapies, Inc.

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