

15th November 2006

**Synairgen plc**  
(‘Synairgen’ or ‘the Company’)

### **Synairgen licenses novel Peptide for Treatment of Asthma**

Southampton, UK - Synairgen plc (LSE: SNG), the drug discovery company focused on targeting the underlying causes of asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease ('COPD'), has obtained an exclusive licence to intellectual property relating to a novel peptide with potential to treat asthma. The discovery was made at the University of Southampton by Dr Allison Lynn Andrews, Dr John Holloway and Professor Donna Davies (a co-founder of Synairgen) in research funded by Asthma UK. In preliminary *in vitro* studies the peptide has been shown to suppress the effects of both IL-4 (interleukin-4) and IL-13 (interleukin-13), the inflammatory proteins considered central to the development of allergic asthma.

Current research strongly suggests that IL-4 and IL-13 are responsible not only for inflammation, but also for the increase in smooth muscle and mucus production, which are the hallmarks of chronic asthma. Therapies targeting these proteins are being progressed by a number of biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies. Most of these strategies involve the development of interleukin blocking mechanisms such as antibodies or 'decoy' receptors, but the Southampton peptide mimics the body's natural mechanism already employed by cells to damp down the effects of both inflammatory proteins. The novel research by the Southampton team, which underpinned this discovery, was recently published in *The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology* (2006; 118:858-865). Synairgen will initially use its proprietary disease models to work closely with Dr Andrews and Professor Davies to validate the discovery, and to develop and optimise this novel peptide in order to progress it into the clinical development stage.

In addition, Synairgen is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr Phillip Monk as Head of Bioscience Development. Phillip was previously Director of the Respiratory and Inflammation Biology group at Cambridge Antibody Technology ('CAT') and led the scientific development of CAT-354, an anti-IL-13 antibody being developed for the treatment of severe asthma. Prior to joining CAT, he worked at Bayer AG within the respiratory disease therapeutic area, focusing on the development of novel therapies for asthma, COPD and cystic fibrosis. At Synairgen, Phillip will be responsible for the translation of discoveries from the laboratory to the clinic.

Richard Marsden, Managing Director of Synairgen said, *"This is a potentially very significant discovery in our mission to find the next generation of asthma therapy. The industry has invested significant resource into individual and combined anti IL-13 and IL-4 approaches, and our proprietary peptide appears to suppress both proteins in a unique way. We are also delighted that, in Phill Monk, we have recruited an individual with great experience in this field to guide the commercial development of this programme."*

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For further information please contact:

**Synairgen** Tel: 02380 512 800  
Richard Marsden, Managing Director

**Hogarth Partnership** Tel: 020 7357 9477  
Georgina Briscoe / Charlie Field

#### **Notes to Editors**

##### **1. Background to the Company**

Synairgen was founded by Professors Stephen Holgate, Donna Davies and Ratko Djukanovic (the 'Founders'), a world-renowned respiratory research team from the University of Southampton (the 'University'), and spun-out from the University in June 2003.

In October 2004 the Company floated on AIM, raising £10.0 million (£9.0 million net of expenses) to enhance its research and development capabilities and invest in its proprietary programmes. The Company's lead proprietary programme for inhaled interferon beta, which seeks to protect severe asthmatics from the debilitating attacks and frequent hospitalisations induced by the common cold (rhinovirus), has progressed into its Phase I clinical trial.

More information about Synairgen may be found at [www.synairgen.com](http://www.synairgen.com).

## **2. Asthma**

- In the United States, there are approximately 20 million asthmatics and the annual economic cost is \$16 billion.
- There are 1,900,000 emergency department visits due to asthma per year in the US.
- The cost of emergency department visits and in-patient care in relation to asthma in the US is \$4.1 billion.
- In the UK, about a fifth of children (21%) and 15% of adults have a diagnosis of asthma.

## **3. Asthma UK**

Asthma UK is the charity dedicated to improving the health and well-being of the 5.2 million people in the UK whose lives are affected by asthma. For up-to-date news on asthma, information and publications, visit the Asthma UK website [www.asthma.org.uk](http://www.asthma.org.uk).