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INEX INKS PARTNERSHIP WITH BGI FOR NEW NON-INVASIVE PRENATAL TEST

iGeneScreen™ detects fetal abnormalities in pregnant women with high accuracy

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 21st 2012: INEX Innovations Exchange Pte. Ltd. (INEX), a leading women's health diagnostics company based in Singapore, today announced its partnership with BGI, the world's largest genomic sequencing institute and bioinformatics powerhouse, to establish a Next Generation Sequencing facility in Singapore to offer a suite of molecular genetics tests, starting with iGeneScreen™, a non-invasive prenatal test to detect fetal chromosomal abnormalities in pregnant women.

Developed by researchers at BGI using a modern genomic sequencing technology called Next Generation Sequencing (NGS), iGeneScreen™ is a blood test that analyzes fetal DNA in maternal blood to detect chromosomal abnormalities. It is a non-invasive screening test requiring only a 5ml blood sample from pregnant women at 12 weeks or later, and it provides highly accurate prenatal test results for Trisomy 13 (Patau Syndrome), Trisomy 18 (Edwards Syndrome) and Trisomy 21 (Down Syndrome).

Amniocentesis is currently the most common invasive prenatal diagnosis procedure offered to pregnant women at increased risk of Down Syndrome, and it carries a 1% risk of miscarriage. The new test will provide a safer alternative for pregnant women at risk of having babies with chromosomal abnormalities.

"We are extremely excited at the prospect of embarking on this relationship with BGI. It is a mutually beneficial partnership in that they will provide the molecular genomic facility and a wealth of sequencing and bioinformatics expertise, and we will offer the technical infrastructure, regional knowledge and distribution network", said Dr. Sidney Yee, Executive Director at INEX.

"Singapore will be the only facility in Asia outside of China offering such a test. This entity is poised to be a Centre-of-Excellence facility that receives and processes tests from South and South-East Asia, the Middle East and Australasia. This first trimester non-invasive prenatal test has huge advantages in that it is highly accurate with a sensitivity of over 99%, and an extremely low false positive rate of below 1%. All this while posing absolutely no risk to the fetus, so we are confident that it will be well received by all pregnant women," she continued.

Regarding this exciting partnership in Singapore, BGI's Chief Operating Officer, Dr. Yin Ye, commented, "BGI is delighted to partner with INEX to jointly establish the Next Generation Sequencing facility in Singapore. BGI, the largest sequencing institute in the world, is offering this non-invasive prenatal test (NIPT) with breakthroughs in bioinformatics analysis. To-date, we have performed over 60,000 such NIPT tests."

"This new state-of-the-art facility here in Singapore is an important next step for BGI, as Singapore is renowned for its robust regulatory framework, highly-skilled molecular technologists, and its excellent reputation for translational research and medical diagnostics. Furthermore, INEX's long experience and research innovation in molecular diagnostics makes it a natural choice for us to partner with here in Singapore. With this facility here in Singapore, and working closely with INEX, we are looking forward to expanding our influence and offerings within the sphere of medical genomics and medical diagnostics in the Asia-Pacific region", he continued.

The facility in Singapore is expected to be operational by the first quarter of 2013.

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