



WHITTEMORE PETERSON  
INSTITUTE FOR NEURO-IMMUNE DISEASE

CERUS

## **Whittemore Peterson Institute and Cerus Confirm Inactivation of XMRV by the INTERCEPT Blood System**

*- Virus linked to chronic fatigue syndrome and prostate cancer is viewed as a blood transfusion risk -*

CONCORD, California and RENO, Nevada--(BUSINESS WIRE)— May 18, 2010-- The Whittemore Peterson Institute for Neuro-Immune Disease (WPI) and Cerus Corporation (NASDAQ:CERS) announced positive results from a study demonstrating the efficacy of the INTERCEPT Blood System to inactivate XMRV, a human retrovirus, in donated platelet components. After sample platelet components were inoculated with XMRV, the infected blood components were treated with INTERCEPT, a system that inactivates pathogens in donated blood. Following treatment, no evidence of infectious XMRV was detected in blood samples. The study results have been submitted for presentation at the AABB Annual Meeting in October.

XMRV is a retrovirus that has recently been linked to prostate cancer and myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS). Other retroviruses, such as HIV and HTLV-1, are known to cause cancer and immune deficiencies. Studies by WPI researchers and collaborators have confirmed that infectious XMRV can be found in human blood cells and that the virus is transmitted through body fluids.

In the joint study conducted by WPI and Cerus, blood samples were evaluated in a validated virus culture test, which allows sensitive detection of XMRV particles that are capable of reproducing. Cerus' INTERCEPT Blood System inactivates pathogens by crosslinking their DNA or RNA, thereby blocking replication and preventing subsequent transmission of infection. INTERCEPT has previously been demonstrated to inactivate high levels of both HIV and HTLV. Cerus and WPI decided to collaborate on inactivation studies for XMRV in order to characterize the treatment's efficacy against this newly recognized human retrovirus.

While research is ongoing regarding the prevalence and disease association of the virus, concern for potential transfusion transmission of XMRV has already led blood centers in Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and New Zealand to ban donations from blood donors with ME/CFS. Earlier this week, the Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Advisory Committee of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services voted unanimously to recommend that U.S. blood centers also defer donors with diagnosed ME/CFS.

"As XMRV is a human retrovirus like HIV, one immediately wonders about the possibility for transfusion transmission of XMRV," said Dr. Judy Mikovits, director of research at WPI. "We chose to work with Cerus on this joint study because developing prevention strategies for XMRV-linked neuro-immune diseases is an important element of the WPI's mission."

"Due to its leadership in the discovery and characterization of XMRV, WPI is an ideal partner to confirm the efficacy of our treatment process," added Lily Lin, vice president of global scientific affairs for Cerus. "Emerging pathogens such as XMRV are a particular challenge for blood transfusion services and highlight a weakness in the current blood banking system."

The INTERCEPT systems for platelets and plasma are used by over 40 blood centers in Europe, Russia and the Middle East. The INTERCEPT Blood System is not yet approved for use in the United States.



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### **ABOUT THE WHITTEMORE PETERSON INSTITUTE**

The Whittemore Peterson Institute for Neuro-Immune Disease exists to bring discovery, knowledge, and effective treatments to patients with illnesses that are caused by acquired dysregulation of the immune system and the nervous system, often resulting in lifelong disease and disability. The Whittemore Peterson Institute is the first institute in the world dedicated to neuro-immune diseases, integrating patient treatment, basic and clinical research and medical education.

### **ABOUT CERUS**

Cerus Corporation is a biomedical products company focused on commercializing the INTERCEPT Blood System to enhance blood safety. The INTERCEPT system is designed to reduce the risk of transfusion-transmitted diseases by inactivating a broad range of pathogens such as viruses, bacteria and parasites that may be present in donated blood. The nucleic acid targeting mechanism of action allows INTERCEPT treatment to inactivate both established transfusion threats, such as hepatitis, HIV, West Nile virus and bacteria, as well as emerging pathogens such as influenza, malaria and dengue. Cerus currently markets and sells the INTERCEPT Blood System for both platelets and plasma in Europe, Russia, the Middle East and selected countries in other regions around the world. The INTERCEPT red blood cell system is in clinical development. Visit <http://www.cerus.com> for more information.

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