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## **EpiStem Successfully Complete First Year Of Mucositis Tests For NIH Biodefense Programme**

[Manchester, UK] EpiStem (LSE:EHP) announced today that it has completed the first year of mucositis efficacy-testing services for potential biodefense drugs, and are about to embark upon an extensive drug screening programme over the coming year.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Medical Countermeasures against Radiological and Nuclear Threats (MCART) programme leads the U.S. effort to develop treatments for radiation sickness following a nuclear terrorist attack. EpiStem is a major provider of services to identify novel drugs that can improve the repair of the gastrointestinal (GI) tract following exposure to irradiation. There are currently no medications approved by the FDA to treat this syndrome. EpiStem is an established provider of similar GI assays for oncology supportive care. These assays provide quantitative and mechanistic data to assess the efficacy of novel drug candidates, enabling companies to make informed decisions regarding the progression of their preclinical pipeline.

Dr Tom MacVittie, who co-ordinates the programme at the University of Maryland School of Medicine said: "Gastrointestinal acute radiation syndrome (GI-ARS) is a massive, currently untreatable, problem following high-dose radiation exposure. Agents that mitigate these effects could reduce sickness and hopefully prevent fatalities. The tests performed by EpiStem are also likely to identify agents with oncology supportive care applications - agents that will reduce the severe ulceration and diarrhoea (mucositis) experienced by patients during radio- and chemo-therapy".

Dr Catherine Booth, head of EpiStem's contract research division commented: "After completion of a series of validity assays, initial studies on first three test drugs have successfully been completed, with approx 10 more with an estimated value of US\$0.75m revenue for the Company in the pipeline for the coming year. The programme is forecast to extend over the next 3 years. EpiStem is also now working to gain GLP compliance for the next phase of the project, in order to help the consortium develop drugs for FDA approval in future years".

Other members of the Consortium include the University of Maryland, Baltimore, the University of Illinois at Chicago, Indiana University at Indianapolis, the Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute at Bethesda, Fast Track Drugs and Biologics LLC, Aotech, LLC, and Information Management Consultants, Inc.

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