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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**VHL Family Alliance Funds Promising Research
In Search of the Cure for VHL**

Boston, Mass., May 5, 2008 – The VHL Family Alliance (VHLFA) has at its core mission a desire to find a cure for von Hippel-Lindau (VHL), a genetic condition that can cause cysts and tumors in numerous places in the body, including: eyes, brain, spine, liver, kidneys and adrenal glands.

In an effort to find the cure for VHL, the VHLFA annually raises funds and reviews research grant applications to assist in the promotion of vital VHL research. The VHLFA spends over 44% of its annual operating budget on funding research, a true testament to research as a core item to the existence of the Alliance.

Some of the research that the VHLFA has funded includes:

- Dr. Bin Teh, Van Andel Research Institute in Michigan – Dr. Teh's research is focused on the genetic changes that occur in the development of clear cell Renal Cell Carcinoma (ccRCC). The most common change is the loss of a chromosome, which includes the VHL gene. The intention of the research is to better understand the relationship to VHL and the development of cancerous tumors including ccRCC. The goal is to find ways to make drugs that would counteract these effects.
- Dr. Don Bellgrau of the University of Colorado in Denver, with his collaborators Richard Duke and Alex Franzusoff, have developed a method for tricking the immune system into seeing a dangerous situation worthy of its full defensive action. This full response then causes the body to destroy the tumor. With grant funding from VHLFA, Dr. Bellgrau will provide proof of the principle that individualized vaccines can be made for specific VHL mutation types, and develop a preclinical roadmap for the rapid use of this approach to treat renal cell carcinoma in humans.

The VHL Family Alliance has an established Research Committee headed by Dr. James Gnarra and

will review grant applications for the Board of Directors to consider at the June 29, 2008 Board of Directors meeting in Orlando, Florida. Funded research projects for 2008-2009 will be announced shortly after selection.

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