23andMe Launches Parkinson’s Disease Genetics Initiative

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Personal Genetics Company to Assemble Online Community of 10,000 Individuals with PD To Drive New Online Research Platform

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Mountain View, CA – March 12, 2009 – 23andMe, Inc., an industry leader in personal genetics, announced today that it has launched a Parkinson’s disease initiative in collaboration with the Parkinson’s Institute and Clinical Center (“PI”) and The Michael J. Fox Foundation (“MJFF”). The first-of-its-kind program will focus on enrolling 10,000 individuals with Parkinson’s disease (“PD”) in the 23andMe Personal Genome Service™ and its new PD community. This cohort will allow 23andMe to both advance research in PD and create an online forum dedicated to connecting individuals and families affected by the disease. PI and MJFF are reaching out to Parkinson’s patients in their networks and encouraging them to participate. 23andMe, PI and MJFF believe this effort will serve as a model for supporting research in many other diseases.

The initiative takes advantage of the 23andMe web-based platform to create an entirely new way to study complex diseases complicated by gene/environment interactions that are difficult to assess using traditional research mechanisms. By using the Internet to query and interact with the research cohort, this platform significantly increases the efficiency and reduces the cost of recruiting participants and conducting research. The broad reach of the web allows individuals who are not near research centers to contribute and be part of the program. Current customers of 23andMe, who are not PD patients, can also contribute by participating as healthy controls, a built-in efficiency that lowers the overall cost.

“We are excited to offer our patients the opportunity to join the 23andMe Parkinson’s community,” said J. William Langston, M.D., the Scientific Director and CEO of PI. “Not only will our patients benefit from the opportunity to know more about their personal genetic background, they understand that knowledge is strength, and only through greater understanding can we collectively advance science and medicine.”

Katie Hood, CEO of The Michael J. Fox Foundation, said, “The 23andMe Parkinson’s initiative holds potential to leverage DNA technology, the Internet, and patient participation to accelerate discoveries that enhance our understanding of Parkinson’s disease and our ability to develop breakthrough therapeutics.”

The initiative is made possible through funding by Google co-founder Sergey Brin. Mr. Brin’s commitment comes from his personal interest in Parkinson’s disease. Brin’s mother has Parkinson’s and he discovered through 23andMe that he has a genetic predisposition to the disease as well. He explained, “We can make significant progress in understanding Parkinson’s disease if individuals join together and contribute their personal experiences to scientific research. Individually, our genes and experiences are lost in a sea of statistical noise. But, taken together they become a high power lens on our inner workings.”
Mr. Brin’s donation substantially underwrites the cost of genotyping the participants, who will pay only $25 compared with the usual commercial price of $399. Individuals who join through the PI and MJFF partnership will have the exact same data, information, tools, and access as individuals who have paid full price for the 23andMe Personal Genome Service.

The company plans to announce similar initiatives around other diseases. “Our approach of combining genetic data with the web-based collection of condition-specific information has the potential to drive the study of many disorders,” said 23andMe co-founder Linda Avey. “We plan to partner with other sponsors and organizations and expand our research into new communities.”

About 23andMe
23andMe, Inc. is a leading personal genetics company dedicated to helping individuals understand their own genetic information through DNA analysis technologies and web-based interactive tools. The company’s Personal Genome Service™ enables individuals to gain deeper insights into their ancestry and inherited traits. 23andMe, Inc., was founded by Linda Avey and Anne Wojcicki in 2006, and the company is advised by a group of renowned experts in the fields of human genetics, bioinformatics and computer science. Its Series A investors include Genentech, Inc., Google Inc. (NASDAQ: GOOG) and New Enterprise Associates. More information is available at www.23andme.com.

About The Michael J. Fox Foundation
Founded in 2000, The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson’s Research is dedicated to ensuring the development of a cure for Parkinson’s disease within the coming decade through an aggressively funded research agenda. The Foundation has funded nearly $140 million in research to date. For more information visit http://www.michaeljfox.org.

About the Parkinson Institute and Clinical Center
Founded in 1988, The Parkinson’s Institute and Clinical Center (PI) is America’s only independent non-profit organization that provides basic and clinical research, clinical trials and a comprehensive movement disorder patient clinic for Parkinson’s disease (PD) and related neurological movement disorders, all under one roof. Its mission is to find the causes, provide first class patient care and discover a cure. This unique freestanding organization supports a strong collaboration of translational medicine designed to more directly connect research to patient care – from the "bench to bedside". For more information visit http://www.thipi.org.

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