



## **Neuromed Announces that Merck & Co., Inc. Discontinues Development of Pain Drug Candidate, Joint Research Program Continues**

**CONSHOHOCKEN, PA and VANCOUVER, BC – August 8, 2007** – Neuromed Pharmaceuticals announced today that Merck & Co., Inc. and Neuromed have decided to discontinue development of NMED-160 (also known as MK-6721), a Phase 2 compound for the treatment of chronic pain. A joint research collaboration will continue to evaluate alternate, earlier stage, therapeutic candidates.

The parties have determined that MK-6721 does not demonstrate the ideal pharmaceutical characteristics considered necessary to advance the compound further in development. No serious adverse events with MK-6721 were observed in clinical trials in which up to a 1,600 mg single dose was administered.

“We are encouraged by what we’ve learned from MK-6721 and are continuing our productive collaboration with Merck with a focus on improving the pharmaceutical properties of our compounds to produce a best-in-class pain treatment,” said Dr. Christopher Gallen, President & CEO of Neuromed. “We believe the N-type calcium channel is an important target for the development of new pain treatments and our studies to date support that. Our collaboration with Merck has resulted in the discovery of additional N-type calcium channel blockers that we continue to advance towards clinical trials.”

“Merck and Neuromed are committed to the further research and development of oral N-type calcium channel blockers for pain,” said Dr. Darryle Schoepp, Senior Vice President, Franchise Head, Neuroscience at Merck. “Neuromed is a leader in the field of oral N-type calcium channel blockers and we are pleased with the results of our ongoing collaboration.”

N-type calcium channel blockers represent a novel class of analgesics that are selective for calcium channels involved in pain signal transmission. Calcium channels control the entry of calcium into the neuron. When a pain signal is transmitted, the channel opens and the calcium concentration increases, triggering the release of neurotransmitters from synaptic vesicles, thereby sending the pain signal to the brain where it is perceived as pain.

### **About Neuromed**

Neuromed is a privately held biopharmaceutical company in business to develop safer and more effective pain drugs. We are combining our pharmaceutical expertise in research, development and commercialization to improve existing pain treatments as well as develop new pain medicines. For more information visit [www.neuromed.com](http://www.neuromed.com).

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