



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Contacts:**

for Aegera Therapeutics Inc.:

John W. Gillard, Ph.D.

Chief Scientific Officer

(514) 288-5532

[john.gillard@aegeera.com](mailto:john.gillard@aegeera.com)

Robert Korneluk, Ph.D.

Inventor, Company Founder

(613) 738-3281

[bob@mqcheo.med.uottawa.ca](mailto:bob@mqcheo.med.uottawa.ca)

**AEGERA EXTENDS INHIBITOR OF APOPTOSIS (IAP) PATENT ESTATE  
WITH SEVEN NEWLY ISSUED PATENTS**

MONTREAL, QC., *February 1, 2001* – Aegera Therapeutics Inc. today announced the issuance of US Patent 6,171,821, the seventh patent to issue in the past five months covering the Inhibitors of Apoptosis (IAPs). This latest patent adds methods for drug discovery, particularly in cancer, by regulating the gene expression and activity of XIAP, a protein which potently controls cellular death of cancer cells.

Aegera continues to discover novel mechanisms for regulation of the IAP gene family, and is pleased to announce the publication today in the February issue of *Nature Cell Biology*, of a novel IAP gene regulator in cancer, called XAF. This protein is mutated or absent in most cancers tested to date. This technology is covered under Aegera's patent 6,107,088. The absence of XAF could explain how IAPs promote cancer formation and resistance to therapy.

Two of the company founders, Dr. Robert Korneluk and Dr. Alex MacKenzie, were the first to discover five key members of the IAP human gene family (NAIP, XIAP, HIAP-1 and -2 and Ts-IAP), and two associated IAP inhibitory factors (XAF-1 and -2), which are potent regulators of caspases. Their work has contributed to the clinical understanding of disorders arising from the dysfunction of cell death or apoptotic processes normally regulated by this important gene family.

"The IAPs play a vital role in delineating the molecular mechanism of apoptosis, and have great potential as anti-cancer technologies." said Robert Korneluk, Ph.D., Professor, University of Ottawa, Director, Genetics Research Laboratory, CHEO Research Institute. "Understanding how these genes are deregulated in cancer has led to totally novel molecular targets for drug discovery."

– MORE –

The following seven US IAP patents have been issued in the past five months:

<b>US Patent #</b>	<b>Title, Issue Date</b>
6,107,041	Detection and modulation of IAPs for the diagnosis and treatment of proliferative disease, issued 8/22/00
6,107,088	XAF genes and polypeptides: methods and reagents for modulating apoptosis, issued 8/22/00
6,133,437	Modulation of IAPs for the treatment of proliferative diseases, issued 10/17/00
6,156,535	Mammalian IAP gene family, primers, probes, and detection methods, issued 12/5/00
6,159,709	XIAP IRES and uses thereof, issued 12/12/00
6,159,948	Therapeutic & drug screening methods for the treatment and prevention of neuronal disease, issued 12/12/00
6,171,821	XIAP IRES and uses thereof, issued 1/9/01

Aegera also owns two previously issued IAP patents, bringing the Company's IAP patent estate to nine patents plus additional applications.

"We look forward to translating the patent issuance into therapeutic applications", said Michael Atkin, CEO. "These biological insights about apoptosis regulation have already led to the identification of compounds to block IAP genes in cancer, with promising pre-clinical results. The next step is to develop antisense and small molecule compounds to move into clinical trials."

Aegera Therapeutics Inc. is a privately held biotechnology company headquartered in Montreal, Canada with a wholly owned subsidiary based in Ottawa - Aegera Oncology Inc. The Company's primary focus is developing small molecules that modulate signal transduction pathways to treat central and peripheral nerve diseases, and to restore normal cell-death mechanisms in cancer by inducing apoptosis. Aegera recently completed a US\$25 million research alliance for stem cell regeneration. For more information, please visit the Aegera web site at <http://www.aegera.com>.

###