



# OXFORD BIODYNAMICS LIMITED

## PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) patients could benefit from a new tool being developed by Oxford Biodynamics partly funded by the UK government**

Oxford, UK. 16<sup>th</sup> December 2014. An Oxford BioDynamics Limited (“OBD” or “the Company”) led consortium has been granted a substantial funding award of £850k from Innovate UK, the UK’s innovation agency (formerly the Technology Strategy Board) for a project worth £1.26m. The prestigious award was secured competitively through a call made under Innovate UK, the UK’s innovation agency's Stratified Medicine Innovation Platform.

This work will see OBD utilising their proprietary EpiSwitch™ technology to validate epigenetic signatures in patients with ALS. These signatures will provide important insight into disease diagnosis, timescales for disease progression and early indication of whether a new drug is having a positive effect. The test will be able to detect markers directly from patient’s blood providing a quick and non-invasive tool for diagnosis and prognosis.

The Oxford based consortium includes The Nuffield Department of Clinical Neurosciences (Oxford University) and Chronos Therapeutics Limited (Chronos) who have complementary interests in the use of biomarker tests for improving the clinical management of patients and the development of novel therapies in ALS.

This programme will place the UK at the forefront of developing new tools to use in the fight against this fatal disease.

OBD CEO, Christian Hoyer Millar commented: *“We are delighted with this decision. It clearly demonstrates the level of support and appreciation for our technology, shown by the broad expert groups and specialist who were involved in the application process. Innovate UK, the UK’s innovation agency support will help further advance OBD’s unique technological biomarker platform built by our University spin-out and used today by a number of US Pharma and Asian health-care clients. This is yet one more contribution to putting the UK back on the world map of leading world class innovation.”*

OBD CSO, Dr Alexandre Akoulitchev commented: *“This is a wonderful opportunity for our technology to deliver a rich battery of companion diagnostic tools in the field of high unmet need. Support from Innovate UK, the UK’s innovation agency, in combination with expertise and guidance from University of Oxford and Chronos enables the EpiSwitch™ technology to prove itself unequivocally in yet another important therapeutic field”*

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Chronos CEO, Dr Huw Jones commented: *“Development of truly effective treatments for this devastating disease is hampered by lack of good prognostic and companion biomarkers. Chronos is delighted to be able to contribute to this programme with the goal of predicting which patients are likely to respond to existing and potential new therapies.”*

Professor Kevin Talbot from the Nuffield Department of Clinical Neurosciences, Oxford University commented: *“My colleagues and I at the Oxford Motor Neurone Disorders Centre are very excited to be working with local Oxford biotechnology companies in the early stages of clinical development of a potential new therapy for ALS. Partnerships like this are an important part of the effort to overcome the very significant barriers to finding effective treatments for this devastating disease”.*

## **Contact**

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## **About Oxford BioDynamics Limited**

Oxford BioDynamics Limited is a biomarker platform technology Company with a proprietary biomarker discovery platform, EpiSwitch™, based on the latest advances in the mechanisms of gene expression, non-coding RNA and epigenetics. The EpiSwitch™ platform identifies and monitors the fundamental epigenetic level of gene regulation associated with the regulatory higher order structures of human chromosomes, also known as chromosome conformation signatures. Chromosomal signatures are a distinct primary step in a cascade of gene deregulation and a major component of epigenetic controls and regulation. The EpiSwitch™ biomarker discovery platform offers a highly effective means of new product development for applications in screening; early detection; companion diagnostic; monitoring; prognosis of disease and chronic conditions associated with aberrant gene expression such as oncology; inflammatory; metabolic; cardiovascular and neurodegenerative conditions. Both OBD's EpiSwitch™ PCR and Array biomarker platforms are compatible with a broad selection of clinical samples, including blood. OBD is actively involved worldwide with both Pharma and governmental health systems.

The Company's Reference Laboratory in Oxford operates at the highest quality standards, holding ISO 13485 and ISO 9001 certifications. The Oxford BioDynamics holding company is registered in England and Wales, with subsidiaries in Singapore, Malaysia and Australia.

## **About Innovate UK**

Innovate UK is the new name for the Technology Strategy Board – the UK's innovation agency. Taking a new idea to market is a challenge. Innovate UK funds, supports and connects innovative businesses through a unique mix of people and programmes to accelerate sustainable economic growth. For further information visit [www.innovateuk.org](http://www.innovateuk.org)

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## About ALS

The motor neurone disease Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS or Lou Gehrig's Disease) is a fatal neurodegenerative disease characterised by progressive death of the primary motor neurones in the central nervous system. Symptoms include muscle weakness and muscle wasting, difficulty in swallowing and undertaking everyday tasks. As the disease progresses, the muscles responsible for breathing can fail, gradually causing dyspnoea or difficulty in breathing. ALS has an average prevalence of 2 per 100,000. Prevalence is higher in UK & USA than many other countries, up to 5 per 100,000. There are estimated to be over 50,000 patients in the USA and 5,000 patients in the UK with the condition. Mortality rates for ALS sufferers is high with 10 year survival after diagnosis below 10% and average survival 39 months from diagnosis. There is only one drug currently approved for treatment, riluzole which provides a modest increase in lifespan for ALS patients but minimal improvement in symptoms.



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