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For Immediate Release

**New Test from Exagen Diagnostics Empowers Patients Taking Common Drug
for Rheumatic Disease:
Physicians and patients welcome improved access to drug monitoring**

Contact: Brian McEvilly, Vice President Marketing – 858 736-5517

SAN DIEGO, CA – A new, non-invasive blood collection method is now available to help physicians and their patients monitor exposure levels to potentially toxic drugs from a single drop of blood. Unlike other “Micro” or “Nano” sample methods this new approach called AVISE Touch™ has been scientifically validated to demonstrate equivalence of fingerstick blood collection to traditional venipuncture blood collection, making the test available throughout the contiguous US including provisional approval from the New York Department of Health.

Exagen Diagnostics, a specialized medical laboratory with offices in Vista, CA and Albuquerque, NM has released the first test using this method to identify levels of hydroxychloroquine (HCQ), brand name Plaquenil. An estimated 750,000 Americans are presently taking HCQ as part of their long-term treatment regimen for chronic rheumatic diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis and lupus. This immunomodulatory drug is considered one of the safest and most cost-effective drugs available. Unfortunately, it is estimated that as few as 50% of patients on HCQ actually achieve beneficial circulating levels of the drug. Physicians and their patients can now work together to achieve drug levels that are associated with improved health and better outcomes, all without ever waiting to have a traditional blood draw.

According to Ron Rocca, President and CEO of Exagen Diagnostics, “The AVISE Touch collection method ushers in a new era of access to information for patients suffering from autoimmune rheumatic diseases. Gone are the days of physicians and their patients not knowing if medications are actually contributing to management of a given condition. We are delighted to be advancing laboratory science and doing so in a way that adds convenience for the patient.”

Dr. Smitha Reddy from the Arthritis Care and Research Center in Poway, CA was one of the contributing physicians to the validation of this technology and had this to say: “AVISE testing plays an important role in my practice, allowing access to cutting edge diagnostic markers historically reserved for academic research centers. This new advance with AVISE Touch brings true convenience to patients who quite frankly live in a world that offers few comforts towards accommodating or improving their condition.”

AVISE Touch is enabled by a unique and patent-pending technology. Collaboration with Neoteryx, Torrance, CA has facilitated the advanced scientific research for which Exagen is known. Exagen’s Chief Scientific Officer, Thierry Dervieux PhD, shared “We are delighted to incorporate Neoteryx’s volumetric absorptive microsampling (VAMS™) technology as it is a perfect fit with our advanced research in the area of rheumatic diseases. This unique blood microsampling approach makes it convenient for patients to access state of the art diagnostic testing while avoiding inconvenience.”

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About Exagen

Exagen Diagnostics, Inc. is a College of American Pathologists (CAP) accredited and CLIA certified rheumatology specialty laboratory that focuses on the significant unmet need for accurate and timely diagnosis, prognosis and monitoring of autoimmune connective tissue disease (CTD). Its groundbreaking solutions address the full continuum of care with tools designed and scientifically proven to help physicians deliver accurate, early diagnosis and optimized therapy. For more information, visit www.exagen.com.

About Lupus and Rheumatoid Arthritis

Lupus and rheumatoid arthritis are autoimmune diseases in which the body attacks its own, healthy tissues and organs. Patients suffer joint pain along with increased risk for other life threatening conditions. Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE), a more severe form of lupus brings with it a host of unwanted symptoms including unexplained fevers, hair loss and fatigue, facial rashes. Women are more likely to suffer from these conditions than men, and there's no definitive cause, though researchers suspect genes as well as environmental factors may play a role.

About Neoteryx

Neoteryx delivers simple, quantitative, and automatable microsampling solutions for biological samples which reduce costs and enable convenient sample collection anywhere, anytime, by anyone. For more information on Neoteryx, visit www.neoteryx.com. The Mitra Microsampler class I medical device is for direct specimen collection of blood and other biological fluids. It is not specific to any clinical test, and is not for use in diagnostic procedures. Use of the Mitra Microsampler in Laboratory Developed Tests (LDTs) requires further processing including the establishment of performance characteristics and successful validation by the laboratory in a manner consistent with CLIA requirements.

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Media Contacts:

Company Name: Exagen Diagnostics

Full Name: Brian McEvelly

E-mail Address: bmcevilly@exagen.com

Website: www.exagen.com

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HYAshaE7Hxc>