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October 29, 2010
- For Immediate Release -

Livermore Instruments Awarded Qualifying Therapeutic Discovery Project Grant

Livermore Instruments Inc. (LII) was recently awarded a grant under the Federal Qualifying Therapeutic Discovery Project (QTDP) tax credit program. LII was selected from among a pool of applicants by the Department of Health and Human Services for its application of the Single Particle Aerosol Mass Spectrometer to the diagnosis of Tuberculosis.

According to World Health Organization statistics, Tuberculosis, a seemingly intractable problem for the developing world, infects fully one third of the human population. In the majority of cases, Tuberculosis will remain dormant for the life of the host who will never manifest symptoms or transmit the disease. However, more than 9 million people do manifest symptoms annually, 1.7 million of whom will ultimately succumb to it. Those symptomatic patients are sufficient to infect a slowly increasing number of people every year. In some cases of antibiotic-resistant TB, there are few good treatment options. In developed countries, skin tests can detect all those with the latent disease, allowing them to be treated prior to becoming active. In the developing world, the pervasive nature of the disease combined with limited medical resources prevents this two-tiered approach to disease control.

If the research being embarked upon proves successful, a SPAMS operated at maximum duty cycle for a single year will be able to detect active transmitters of the disease non-invasively in roughly one minute at a cost of US\$0.50. Because SPAMS will only detect those patients who are actively spreading the disease, it will allow treatment resources to target those patients whose TB poses the greatest risk to themselves and their communities. Such a small logistical burden and turnaround time will allow on-site testing of entire rural villages in days, breaking the transmission cycle and allowing TB to die out in a generation.

The QTDP grant is being used to jump-start the research to realize this vision, allowing LII to begin a collaboration with the University of California, San Francisco, to move the test from laboratory to clinic. Livermore Instruments is grateful to the American people for providing the QTDP funding.