



Omega Laboratories Presents Data on Hair Specimens for Federal Workplace Drug Testing Program

MOGADORE, Ohio, July 23, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- Omega Laboratories, Inc. is pleased to announce that it is assisting the Drug Testing Advisory Board (DTAB) with the evaluation of hair specimens for use in the Federal Workplace Drug Testing Program. Recent concerns and data have emerged which challenge the effectiveness of traditional urine-based testing. As a result, the DTAB assembled authorities from across the drugs of abuse testing industry, including Omega's Laboratory Director Dr. David Engelhart, at its July meeting in order to thoroughly explore the testing of hair specimens as a valuable and long-needed addition to the Federal Workplace Drug Testing Program.

During the July 15th DTAB meeting in Rockville, Maryland, members were given presentations by highly-recognized authorities in the drug testing industry, including the laboratory directors from the three largest United States based workplace hair testing laboratories. Dr. David Engelhart of Omega Laboratories confirmed the proven scientific reproducibility of hair testing, stating that "proficiency testing has shown consistent results of the hair testing screening processes across multiple laboratories worldwide."

Public comments at this meeting mirrored those from other DTAB meetings over the last several years, which strongly favored the addition of hair as a specimen for testing. Five-years of dual testing data from the trucking industry, which included over 200,000 DOT driver candidates from more than 25 different motor carriers, demonstrates that urine testing by itself is no longer effective for pre-employment screening. Industry experts in attendance noted the availability of existing qualifications for testing laboratories, including accreditation by the College of American Pathologists (CAP) and the internationally accepted ISO/IEC 17025 standard, as well as the thorough review and clearances already granted by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), another agency within Health and Human Services (HHS). The fact that the three main workplace hair testing laboratories have achieved equivalent levels of accreditation and participate in a robust international proficiency testing program should lead to swift and simple acceptance.

Since 1988, organizations that are required to perform Federal Workplace Drug Testing have been limited to the use of urine specimens. Many motor carriers have chosen to go above and beyond the federal requirements and have added hair testing to ensure that they are screening out potentially dangerous employees. This comes at a cost, as these companies are still required to pay for the currently mandated urine testing as well. Hair specimen testing provides a significantly longer detection window, is very difficult to adulterate, and eliminates collection issues associated with urine. As a result, hair testing has consistently identified over three times as many illegal substance users as urine testing in regulated industry pre-employment trial programs. Regulated industries in other countries, including airlines and government agencies, have already had improved success with both hair and laboratory-based oral fluid testing.

The DTAB is an advisory committee for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), who established the board to "improve the quality of systems for drug testing." The decision to evaluate hair testing comes only eighteen months after the DTAB fast-tracked the review of laboratory-based oral fluid testing which also offers many advantages over traditional testing methods.

"We feel that the acceptance of both hair and laboratory-based oral fluid testing by SAMHSA will be a key factor in maintaining the United States drug testing program's position as the true 'gold standard,'" states Bill Corl, CEO of Omega Laboratories.

About Omega Laboratories, Inc. - Omega Laboratories, Inc. is a state-of-the-art facility providing laboratory-based hair and oral fluid testing for drugs of abuse to over 5,000 clients worldwide. Omega currently holds CAP Forensic Drug Testing accreditation, is accredited to ISO/IEC 17025 standards, and has obtained screening clearances from the FDA. Omega's reputation for performing accurate, timely and cost effective testing, coupled with an unmatched reputation for client service, has positioned Omega as the leader in the alternative specimen drug testing industry.

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