DURECT Announces Results From Research Collaboration With the University of Maastricht Showing Blood Flow to the Ischemic Heart Restored Following Local Administration of Growth Factors

CUPERTINO, Calif., Oct 25, 2001 /PRNewswire via COMTEX/ — DURECT Corporation (Nasdaq: DRRX) announced yesterday research results showing in animal models that new blood vessels are formed and that blood flow to an ischemic heart can be restored following targeted delivery of fibroblast growth factor to the heart. Dr. Randolph M. Johnson, DURECT's Vice President Preclinical Research & Director of Central Nervous System Disorders, presented these results yesterday at the Techvest 3rd Annual Conference on Tissue Repair, Replacement and Regeneration (TR3) in New York.

These results are from an ongoing research collaboration initiated in 1998 between DURECT and the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology, Cardiovascular Research Institute Maastricht ("CARIM"), University of Maastricht, The Netherlands focusing on targeted chronic administration of compounds to the diseased heart. Dr. Harry A. J. Struijker Boudier, Scientific Director of CARIM, is leading the program.

"This research suggests that we may be able to develop an innovative approach to treat some of the most debilitating unmet medical needs in the cardiovascular field," said Dr. Johnson. "Ischemic heart disease, characterized by reduced blood flow in the heart, is one of the leading causes of death in our society. Present therapeutic approaches aim at bypassing obstructions in the coronary circulation by performing a coronary artery bypass graft, restoring flow by angioplasty with placement of a stent, or reducing the heart's demand for oxygen using medication. The disadvantages of these treatment methods are that frequently the blockage returns or the blockage returns in smaller blood vessels where no treatment is available. The CARIM research suggests that such diseases may be treated by regrowing blood vessels and thereby restoring function to the heart. CARIM is one of the leading medical and scientific centers for cardiovascular research to develop new treatments for heart disease and we are very excited to collaborate with a core team of experts in this field."

"Our work in collaboration with DURECT has demonstrated the practical approach and superior method of treatment that we have pioneered in local drug delivery," stated Dr. Struijker Boudier. "We not only confirmed experimentally in animal models the 'local advantage' of targeted drug delivery to the heart but also created an increased number of capillaries (small blood vessels) and restored the heart of a diseased animal to normal function."

There will be an audio archive available of Dr. Randolph M. Johnson's presentation at the Techvest 3rd Annual Conference on DURECT's website at http://www.www.durect.com under the Calendar of Event section of "Investor

Relations.”

DURECT Corporation is pioneering the development and commercialization of pharmaceutical systems for the treatment of chronic debilitating diseases and enabling biotechnology-based pharmaceutical products. DURECT’s goal is to deliver the right drug to the right site in the right amount at the right time. DURECT’s pharmaceutical systems combine technology innovations from the medical device and drug delivery industries with proprietary pharmaceutical and biotechnology drug formulations. These capabilities can enable new drug therapies or optimize existing therapies based on a broad range of compounds, including small molecule pharmaceuticals as well as biotechnology molecules such as proteins, peptides and genes. DURECT focuses on the treatment of chronic diseases including pain, CNS disorders, cardiovascular disease and cancer. DURECT holds an exclusive license from ALZA Corporation to develop and commercialize products in selected fields based on the DUROS(R) implant technology. Chronogesic(TM), a 3-month continuous infusion subcutaneous implant for the treatment of chronic pain, is the first product in this series and completed phase II testing in June, 2001. DURECT also owns three proprietary erodible implant platform technologies, including SABER(TM) (a patented and versatile depot injectable useful for protein delivery), microspheres and drug-loaded implants. DURECT also commercializes IntraEAR(R) catheters which have been used by physicians to treat inner ear disorders.

Founded in 1998, DURECT is headquartered in Cupertino, CA. The company’s World Wide Web site can be accessed at http://www.www.durect.com . To join DURECT’s email alert service, please register by selecting “Email Alerts” on the main Investor Relations web page at http://www.www.durect.com .

NOTE: Chronogesic(TM), SABER(TM) and IntraEAR(R) are trademarks of DURECT Corporation. DUROS(R) is a trademark of ALZA Corporation.

The statements in this press release regarding DURECT’s research, future research plans, research results and anticipated results, expected product benefits, products in development, research collaborations, product development plans or potential product markets are forward-looking statements involving risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from those in such forward-looking statements. Potential risks and uncertainties include, but are not limited to, DURECT’s ability to successfully complete clinical trials, research, develop, manufacture and commercialize its products, obtain product and manufacturing approvals from regulatory agencies, validate and qualify a manufacturing facility and manage its growth and expenses, as well as marketplace acceptance of DURECT’s products. Further information regarding these and other risks is included in DURECT’s Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended June 30, 2001 filed with the SEC on August 14, 2001, and Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2000 filed with the SEC on March 30, 2001, under the heading “Factors that may affect future results.”

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