NEWS RELEASE

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NIH awards Boise-based e-Merge Medical Technologies 'Novel Data Capture and Assessment Technology for Autism'

BOISE, Idaho (April 20, 2006) – e-**M**erge Medical Technologies, a leading medical technology services company and founder of web-based resource TalkAutism, has been awarded a Small Business Innovative Research grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to study the impact of special video capture to more effectively assess and treat children with autism.

"This video capture technology has real promise to provide Behavior Imaging™ (B.I.) for all of healthcare – where currently there is no helpful imaging modality. When fully developed, even rural families, teachers and doctors could use this to get specialty help for children with autism, and potentially improve assessment, treatment and research for more broad behavioral and mental disorders as well," says Ron Oberleitner, president and founder of e-**M**erge Medical Technologies, LLC.

Specifically, e-**M**erge will evaluate and further develop a video collection technology called B.I. Capture™, a system designed to record, annotate and share behaviors from their natural environments, with the potential to be viewed remotely by authorized professionals. In the research study facilitated by this grant, this data should allow educators to more credibly perform Functional Behavior Assessments (FBAs) in schools, which underpin the detailed intervention plans designed for these students. The proposed technology, developed at the Georgia Institute of Technology, will permit educators to record only those behaviors judged to be important for later retrieval and review.

The technology also features some capabilities particularly useful for the capturing of behaviors. "B.I. Capture features proprietary 'experience buffers', which function as an alternative for

recording 100% of behavioral events, and can help a professional (or caregiver) capture behaviors BEFORE one notices them", explains Dr. Gregory Abowd. Abowd is a world renowned computing and video expert at the Georgia Institute of Technology, a former Rhodes Scholar, father of two children with autism and inventor of B.I. Capture's technology.

In phase I of the process, e-**M**erge and Georgia Institute of Technology will modify the preliminary system for use in a school environment with the aid of advice from focus groups, explore the potential privacy/legal hurdles, and assess feasibility in a small pilot study.

Abowd acknowledges that although "event recording" has been successfully used in such medical applications as long-term electrocardiograph monitoring, this concept has not been employed in relation to autism or similar conditions. "Our proposed method will permit educators to save information leading up to critical events even after those critical events have occurred," says Abowd. "This should be especially valuable for conditions such as autism that typically require intensive, individualized diagnosis, treatment, and monitoring."

Dr. Uwe Reischl, Director of the Center of Health Policy for Boise State University, has researched some of the technology's attributes, and is optimistic about the potential for widespread adoption of B.I. Capture, once it is exhaustively pilot tested in the field and then modified. "The need is so great to communicate behaviors to better understand and treat them," says Dr. Reischl. "The current available solutions are so limited and inadequate to deal with the increasing incidence of autism that is treated both in the home and school environments. Successful demonstration of this system in the CWA population should make it attractive in other applications that depend on in-depth analysis by educators."

Rick Ritter, Director of Technology Outreach at BSU's TECenter, which assists companies in finding R&D funding for their innovative ideas, emphasizes that "this is a highly competitive process within those Federal agencies that have SBIR/STTR programs and to have e-**M**erge be selected demonstrates the cutting edge work being done by Idaho companies.

"We encourage companies to tap the federal SBIR program, because it can support such a potential breakthrough, and subsequently lead to the growth of an Idaho company. We've been happy to support e-**M**erge to help them successfully win such a grant to stimulate this research right out of Idaho."

Anticipating successful results, a Phase II research proposal will be applied for the National Institutes of Health that can bring an additional $750,000 to more fully modify and test this innovation. As this research proves successful, commercialization of this technology is planned to be carried out by Caring Technologies, an Idaho corporation that will incorporate this with their own Personal Health Record service to international markets both for special needs and more broadly based healthcare markets.

About e-Merge Medical Technologies

e-**M**ERGE Medical Technologies specializes in working with emerging and established companies and universities who have innovative technology, but limited market development experience in the healthcare technology market. e-**M**erge helps accelerate the release of relevant products and services to the health marketplace, with the goal of improving patient care.
For more information visit: ***www.e-mergemedical.com***.

About Autism

Autism is one of the fastest-growing and most prevalent childhood developmental disorders in the United States, affecting as many as one in every 166 births (source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). Autism is a neurological disorder that interferes with normal development in language, intuitive thought, social interaction and an ability to connect with surroundings. Approximately half of all children with autism are unable to communicate their needs using spoken words. Most are unable to accommodate changes in their daily routines. Associated problems include hyperactivity, self-injurious behavior, sleeplessness, eating disorders and gastrointestinal problems. Order and consistently administered therapeutic interventions are critical to the affected child and family's well being.

About SBIR

SBIR, (Small Business Innovation Research Program) is a government sponsored, highly competitive program that encourages small businesses to explore their technological potential and provides the incentive to profit from its commercialization. By including qualified small businesses in the nation's R&D arena, high-tech innovation is stimulated and the United States gains entrepreneurial spirit as it meets its specific research and development needs.