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For Immediate Release
February 23, 2016

**Foundation Venture Capital Group commits up to \$500,000 in start-up
advancing technology platform for tissue visualization**

New Brunswick, NJ—James M. Golubieski, president of Foundation Venture Capital Group, LLC, announced today that the company has made a \$500,000 commitment to Visikol, Inc., a new start-up company from Rutgers University that has developed a versatile biological clearing agent called Visikol that penetrates tissue and renders it transparent without causing structural damage.

The Visikol technology has applications in the fields of toxicology, pre-clinical drug development, clinical diagnostics, basic research and plant biology as tissues can be easily visualized in 3 dimensions.

The company was founded by PhD candidate Michael Johnson, chief executive officer; Nick Crider, chief operating officer and PhD candidate Tom Villani, chief scientific officer. It has exclusively licensed the worldwide rights to the technology through an agreement with Rutgers. This patent-pending technology was invented by Mr. Villani, while he was a graduate student, along with Rutgers professors Drs. James Simon and Adolfina Koroch.

The founders explained that the product is a nondestructive optical clearing agent offering a high level of transparency that greatly reduces problems with light scattering and enables high resolution images to be captured from biological tissues.

“This biological clearing agent is transformative in its ability to easily, effectively and quickly clear animal and plant tissue,” said Mr. Johnson. “Because it can clear whole tissue, it allows for 3-D visualization of tissue instead of the traditional slicing based 2-D visualization approach.”

With the invention of the microscope in the late 1500s, researchers have been seeking better ways to visualize the inside of biological tissue. Up until recently, this meant slicing tissue into thin slices so light could penetrate enough to illuminate the inside of the tissue.

“While many modern techniques now exist to provide 3-D visualization of tissue, we are excited about this development in the biological clearing arena because current techniques obscure important cellular and biochemical information and researchers must still resort to slicing tissue to recover data,” explained George F. Heinrich, MD, vice chair and CEO of Foundation Venture Capital Group, an affiliate of New Jersey Health Foundation. “This new platform adds significant value to fields like drug development and cancer diagnostics as it allows for more accurate information to be obtained from tissue.”

Biologists, biochemists and geneticists who need to visualize the anatomical location of cellular structure, proteins/enzymes, mRNA, and reporter genes within whole tissue are among those who can benefit from this innovative product, which can be used with light microscopy, fluorescence microscopy, confocal microscopy and single/multiphoton microscopy. It also has an educational component, providing a valuable addition to any biology classroom.

For more information contact Mike Wiley, vice president of Foundation Venture Capital Group at mwiley@njhf.org or (908) 731-6612.

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About Foundation Venture Capital Group

[Foundation Venture Capital Group](#), an affiliate of New Jersey Health Foundation, makes private equity investments to participate in establishing and managing biomedical start-up companies in New Jersey headed toward commercialization. In addition to Visikol, its portfolio companies currently include:

- **Actinobac Biomed Inc.**, developing a therapeutic agent targeting blood cells for the treatment of hematological malignancies such as leukemia and lymphomas;
- **Affinetti Biologics, Inc.**, advancing research in the development of therapeutic and diagnostic products based on new discoveries in oral biology and dental medicine;
- **CellXplore, Inc.**, engaged in the development of biomarker-based in vitro diagnostic assays for cancer;
- **Celvive, Inc.**, working to develop technology to treat patients with chronic spinal cord injuries with their own adult stem cells;

- **Durin Technologies**, working to develop a blood test to diagnose and assess severity of Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and other neurodegenerative diseases;
- **GeneAssess, Inc.**, developing the FRY gene as a predictive biomarker for breast and other cancers;
- **MentiNova, Inc.**, working to validate a drug that reduces the side effects of L-Dopa Induced Dyskinesia
- **NovoPedics, Inc.**, developing an implantable meniscus replacement/regeneration medical device to restore mobility to patients suffering from severe meniscus knee injuries
- **Snowdon Pharmaceuticals, Inc.**, a drug discovery company focused on several major therapeutic areas and providing computational tools to rapidly identify high-value molecules from their library of vendor-available compounds