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**GENE THERAPY PROVES EFFECTIVE IN TREATING SEVERE HEART FAILURE; HOLDS  
POTENTIAL TO DRASTICALLY REDUCE HEALTHCARE COSTS FOR  
HEART FAILURE PATIENTS**

*Discussion at Heart Failure Society of America 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Scientific Meeting Addresses  
Gene Therapy Treatments and Associated Benefits*

**SAN DIEGO (Sept. 14, 2010)** – The 14th Annual Scientific Meeting of the Heart Failure Society of America (HFSA) will feature a discussion titled “Latest Developments in Stem Cell and Gene Therapy in Heart Failure” which includes a presentation by Dr. Roger Hajjar, Director of the Cardiovascular Research Institute, one of the 12 translational science institutes at The Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York. Dr. Hajjar’s discussion will focus on the injection of a gene into patients with advanced heart failure to reverse the debilitating and life-threatening condition.

Over ten years, Dr. Hajjar and his team have validated the cardiac sarcoplasmic reticulum calcium ATPase pump, SERCA2a, as a target in heart failure and developed methodologies for cardiac-directed gene transfer. This work has led to the initiation and recent completion of phase 1 and phase 2 First-in-Man clinical trials of SERCA2a gene transfer in patients with advanced heart failure.

Patients treated with high dose therapy have shown 90 percent risk reduction for heart failure-related cardiovascular events such as significantly worsening health, the need for a transplant or cardiovascular device support, intravenous treatment or death.

“The patients receiving this gene therapy have shown marked improvements,” said Dr. Hajjar. “Through our tests we’ve observed heart failure patients’ quality of life improves greatly for significantly less cost than traditional therapies.”

Patients treated with the gene therapy treatment may result in a large decrease in personal health care costs across their trial period. In nine months, individuals treated with the trial’s placebo spent an average of \$27,118 on health care, paying for expenses such as hospital stays, emergency medicine, and home care. Comparatively, in the same period of time, individuals treated with gene therapy spent an average of \$329 on health care.

“Gene Therapy is a breakthrough in the treatment of heart failure patients that holds the potential to reverse the disease while also making treatment and recovery more affordable than ever,” said Dr.

Douglas Mann, HFSA President. "It is critical for the medical community to continue to integrate science and clinical medicine so biomedical research can improve patient care."

For a complete list of annual meeting sessions or for details on attending the conference, call (617) 226-7183 or visit [www.hfsa.org](http://www.hfsa.org) and click on Annual Scientific Meeting. There is no registration fee for accredited journalists. Interview areas will be available on-site in addition to a fully-staffed press room with phone and internet accessibility. You may follow news from the meeting on Twitter #HFSA

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### **About Heart Failure**

Heart failure is a progressive condition in which the heart muscle becomes weakened after it is injured, most commonly from heart attack or high blood pressure, and gradually loses its ability to pump enough blood to supply the body's needs. Many people are not aware they have heart failure because the symptoms are often mistaken for signs of getting older. Heart failure affects from 4.6 to 4.8 million individuals in the United States. Demographic and clinical evidence strongly suggests that the prevalence of heart failure will increase throughout the next decade. Ten to 15 years ago heart failure was considered a "death sentence;" however, recent advances in treatment have shown that early diagnosis and proper care in early stages of the condition are key to slowing, stopping or in some cases reversing progression, improving quality of life, and extending life expectancy. For more information on heart failure, please visit [www.abouthf.org](http://www.abouthf.org).

### **About the Heart Failure Society of America**

The Heart Failure Society of America (HFSA) is a nonprofit educational organization, founded in 1994 as the first organized association of heart failure experts. The HFSA provides a forum for all those interested in heart function, heart failure research and patient care. The Society also serves as a resource for governmental agencies (FDA, NIH, NHLBI, CMS). The HFSA Annual Scientific Meeting is designed to highlight recent advances in the development of strategies to address the complex epidemiological, clinical and therapeutic issues of heart failure. Additional information on HFSA can be found at [www.hfsa.org](http://www.hfsa.org).