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## Volition Unveils Its Epigenetic Toolbox

AUSTIN, Texas, Feb. 18, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- VolitionRx Limited (NYSE AMERICAN: VNRX) ("Volition") today announced that research on its Nu.Q<sup>(TM)</sup> Capture program has led to the development of a suite of novel epigenetic tools building on the breakthroughs announced last month on its assay platform. This epigenetic toolbox aims to initially be used in cancer diagnostics.

Dr. Mark Eccleston, one of the founding scientists of Volition and its Business Development Director commented, "I believe these exciting new tools will lead to a paradigm shift in epigenetic based blood tests and help us to establish a leadership position in the epigenetics diagnostics field. We are now processing samples and expect to announce patient data demonstrating the wide utility of these methods in the coming months."

Dr. Jake Micallef, Chief Scientific Officer at Volition added, "These Nu.Q<sup>(TM)</sup> Capture technologies have emanated from years of focused research in clinical epigenetics. We have filed several patents relating to these Nu.Q<sup>(TM)</sup> methods to add to Volition's already extensive patent portfolio, with the aim of securing broad coverage and protection in this key area of epigenetics."

Volition has developed and has filed patent applications on its novel Nu.Q<sup>(TM)</sup> Capture based epigenetic tools, in addition to its bead-based Nu.Q<sup>(TM)</sup> assay format, to decipher the epigenetic and environmental profiles of cancer nucleosomes with the aim of using:

- Nu.Q<sup>(TM)</sup> Capture methods to enrich cancer nucleosomes and simplify sequencing based "liquid biopsies".
- Nu.Q<sup>(TM)</sup> Capture methods to isolate intact nucleosomes from plasma for mass spectrometry analysis in the framework of both biomarker discovery and clinical diagnostics.
- Nu.Q<sup>(TM)</sup> Capture to measure global methylation patterns in a simple platform.
- Nu.Q<sup>(TM)</sup> Capture to concentrate nucleosomal markers prior to our Nu.Q<sup>(TM)</sup> assays to increase accuracy.
- Nu.Q<sup>(TM)</sup> platform to detect and measure circulating nucleosomes and transcription factors with potential to be tissue specific, and therefore cancer specific. This, if successful could result in a simple blood test for multiple cancers.

Volition is using these tools to expand diagnostic developments that focus on circulating DNA fragment analysis, to a broader and potentially more powerful investigation of the

epigenetic status of a patient's circulating chromosome fragments, in addition to its ongoing work with its assay-based format in a range of cancers.

## **Further Technical Background**

Cell free DNA has been widely investigated for liquid biopsy in the previous decade. The cell free DNA ("cfDNA") in circulation is derived from fragmented chromatin released as cells die. This originates mainly as a result of natural turnover of white blood cells, but also from diseased cells including cancer. The relatively large background of cfDNA from normal cells makes detection of low levels of circulating tumor DNA ("ctDNA") much more difficult, especially in the context of early disease detection and has limited the applications of liquid biopsy to detection of specific mutations in advanced disease which can be used to guide treatment in a precision medicine paradigm.

DNA is relatively unstable and only fragments protected by association with proteins (predominantly histone/DNA complexes or nucleosomes and smaller transcription factor/DNA complexes) survive in circulation. The proteins and various chemical modifications to them control access to the DNA within our chromosomes and therefore the genes that are selectively switched on and off. This epigenetic level of control determines how our genetic code is ultimately expressed and allows the formation of all the cells in our body from the same genetic code. In cancer, dysregulation of this epigenetic code can deactivate tumor suppressor genes or activate tumor promoters.

Most research into new diagnostic methods in oncology has focused on extracting the short cfDNA fragments from their associated proteins circulating in the blood of cancer patients to identify genetic information (mutations for example). This process removes the equally important epigenetic components in those circulating fragments. The discarded nucleosomes and transcription factor complexes contain an immense repository of epigenetic information. At its simplest level this is related to activation/suppression of associated genetic mutations but may also explain tissue of origin of the cfDNA and can explain why ctDNA is subtly shorter than general cfDNA. Combining both the epigenetic features of the DNA/protein complexes and the DNA sequencing can differentiate disease associated and background chromatin fragments and will provide much deeper understanding of how and why these fragments are associated with disease.

## **About Volition**

Volition is a multi-national epigenetics company developing simple, easy to use, cost effective blood tests to help diagnose a range of cancers and other diseases. Early diagnosis has the potential to not only prolong the life of patients, but also to improve their quality of life. The tests are based on the science of Nucleosomics™, which is the practice of identifying and measuring nucleosomes in the bloodstream or other bodily fluid - an indication that disease is present. Volition is primarily focused on human diagnostics but also has a subsidiary focused on animal diagnostics.

Volition's research and development activities are centered in Belgium, with additional offices in Texas, London and Singapore, as the company focuses on bringing its diagnostic products to market.

For more information about Volition, visit Volition's website (<http://www.volitionrx.com>) or

connect with us via:

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## Media / Investor Contacts

Louise Batchelor, Volition <a href="mailto:mediarelations@volitionrx.com">mediarelations@volitionrx.com</a> +44 (0)7557 774620	Scott Powell, Volition <a href="mailto:investorrelations@volitionrx.com">investorrelations@volitionrx.com</a> +1 (646) 650 1351
Joseph Green, Edison Advisors <a href="mailto:jgreen@edisongroup.com">jgreen@edisongroup.com</a> +1 (646) 653 7030	

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reflect future events or circumstances.

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