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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## Akonni awarded $435K NIH Grant to develop low cost point-of-care diagnostics for *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* drug-resistant strains

### New device to serve minority communities impacted by MDR/XDR-TB

**FREDERICK, MD – July 27, 2010** – Akonni Biosystems®, a molecular diagnostics (MDx) company focused on developing and manufacturing rapid, high multiplex solutions for infectious disease testing, today announced receipt of a $435K grant from the National Institutes of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering at the National Institutes of Health.  The award will enable Akonni to accelerate development of its hands-free, sample-to-answer system for identifying a broader range of multi-drug resistant strains of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (MTB).

A great disparity in the susceptibility to tuberculosis (TB) exists between people of different socioeconomic classes and races in the United States.  For every TB-infected white individual, there are an estimated 23 Asians, 21 Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders, 9 African-Americans, 8 Latinos, and 6 Native Americans with the disease.  The goal of this grant is to provide high quality testing to underserved populations, allowing for more effective treatment of these patients.

Akonni's Chris Cooney, Principal Investigator on the grant states, "Using Akonni's TruArray® gel-drop microarray as the basis for the test gives us the ability to simultaneously interrogate tens to hundreds of genetic markers from a single patient sample to identify the most common drug resistant strains of MTB.  Our patented gel-drop array approach also gives us the ability to manufacture and deliver the tests at a price point that is affordable for lower cost settings."

Collaborating with Akonni Biosystems on this program will be Laboratorios Medicos Especializados (LME) in Juarez, Mexico, who will evaluate and verify the point-of-care prototype system.  LME will be providing feedback to guide product development, and participate in verification of the technology on specimens.

Michael Villanueva of LME states, "Although the number of TB cases in Mexico has declined substantially over the past decade, improved diagnostic tools are still needed to detect drug

resistant strains.  For this reason there is a worldwide pursuit to develop a user-friendly, rapid-identification platform that is coupled with antibiotic susceptibility-testing."  Mr. Villanueva adds, "Akonni's multiplex, array-based approach has the ability to interrogate the most important drug-resistant markers from a single patient sample, and at an affordable price.  Speeding time to treatment, the TruArray system, may ultimately prove to be a game-changing tool, helping against the spread of tuberculosis."

For more information visit: www.akonni.com.

**About Akonni Biosystems**
Akonni Biosystems was founded in 2003 and has over 20 patents issued with 13 others pending.  The company's core technology is based on work developed at Argonne National Laboratory and the Engelhardt Institute of Molecular Biology and utilizes gel-drop array technologies optimized for medical applications.  Supported by a series of government grants and contracts from NIH, CDC, DOE, DOD, NIJ, and NSF, the company has significantly advanced the original technology by improving the system's capabilities from sample preparation to final result.  Commercial products and products in its near-term pipeline include rapid sample preparation methodologies for nucleic acid extraction and multiplex panel assays for detecting multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB), upper respiratory infections, viral encephalitis, and hospital-acquired infections (MRSA).