CryoLife's SynerGraft, First Effective ''Tissue Engineered'' Heart Valve Implant, Highlighted At International Symposium

May 17, 1999
Health/Medical Writers

ATLANTA--(BW HealthWire)--May 17, 1999--

Paper Presented by Dr. Mark O'Brien, Renowned Heart Surgeon

CryoLife, Inc. (NYSE:CRY), the leader in the development and commercialization of living human tissue implantable devices and a manufacturer and distributor of stentless heart valves and surgical adhesives, today announced that it has transplanted an unfixed pig valve into a sheep without the valves calcifying or being rejected. This procedure was the subject of a paper presented by Dr. Mark O'Brien, a paid consultant to CryoLife, Inc. and a member of the CryoLife Cardiovascular Medical Advisory Board, today at the Stentless Bioprostheses Third International Symposium held in the Cayman Islands. In the paper, which is the first clinical presentation of CryoLife's SynerGraft(R) heart valve technology, Dr. O'Brien stated that he believes that the CryoLife technology could potentially represent a significant breakthrough in heart valve replacement.

The Company also announced that it expects to file an Investigational Device Exemption (IDE) with the FDA in the fourth quarter of 1999 seeking approval to begin its human clinical trials of its SynerGraft technology.

Steven G. Anderson, President and Chief Executive Officer of CryoLife, said, "The goal of CryoLife's SynerGraft program is the development of a new biologic human heart valve. The program incorporates the use of a porcine heart valve which is depopulated of porcine cells, leaving a collagen matrix that is repopulated with human cells, providing a bioengineered human heart valve with similar structure and biodynamics as the patient's own heart valve."

In conclusion, Mr. Anderson added, "The technology discussed in this presentation represents a major advance for our SynerGraft program. The paper presented by Dr. O'Brien demonstrates that the SynerGraft porcine valves which were implanted in sheep were functional and the valve leaflets showed no evidence of calcification after 160 days. The conclusion of the paper was that the SynerGraft valves reduced the risk of calcification, and it suggests that prolonged functionality of such valves is attainable."

Dr. Mark O'Brien said, "Applying SynerGraft technology to porcine heart valves appears promising. The lack of calcification and rejection, along with continued functioning, bodes very well for future trials. Although a great deal of work remains to be done, if we are ultimately successful, SynerGraft technology could be an early stage in finding a solution to the shortage of human heart valves throughout the world."

Founded in 1984, CryoLife, Inc. is the leader in the development and commercialization of implantable living human tissues for use in cardiovascular, vascular, and orthopaedic surgeries throughout the United States and Canada. The Company's BioGlue(R) surgical adhesive, CE marked in the European Union for use in vascular and pulmonary sealing and repair, is distributed throughout Europe. The Company also manufactures CryoLife-O'Brien(R) and CryoLife-Ross(TM) stentless porcine heart valves which are distributed within the European Community.

Statements made in this press release which look forward in time involve risks and uncertainties and are "forward-looking" statements within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Such risks and uncertainties include the possibility that the FDA will not approve human clinical trials of SynerGraft technology, the risk that SynerGraft heart valve technology will not perform in humans as it has in animals or that unforeseen complications may arise subsequent to the use of SynerGraft heart valves such as those relating to calcification and functionality, the possibility that SynerGraft heart valve technology will not be successfully developed, or if successfully developed, that surgeons may choose not to utilize SynerGraft heart valve technology, changes in economic cycles, competition from other companies, changes in laws and governmental regulations applicable to the Company and other risk factors detailed in the Company's Securities and Exchange Commission filings, including the Company's Prospectus dated March 30, 1998, contained in its Registration Statement on Form S-3 (No. 333-46545).

For additional information about the Company, visit CryoLife's web site: http://www.cryolife.com

Editor's Note: CryoLife Customer Service may be accessed by telephone: 1-800-438-8285 (U.S. and Canada) 1-770-419-3355 (International) 1-770-590-3753 (International fax) E-mail: customerservice@cryolife.com

--30--AR/na*

CONTACT: CryoLife Inc.
Roy Vogeltanz, 800/438-8285

KEYWORD: GEORGIA INTERNATIONAL CANADA
INDUSTRY KEYWORD: MEDICINE BIOTECHNOLOGY