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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**The World Molecular Imaging Society Welcomes Two New Interest Groups:  
Synthetic Biology & Reporter Genes, Nanotechnology & Theranostics**

**CULVER CITY, Calif., January 26, 2016** – The World Molecular Imaging Society (WMIS) has added two new interest groups to their existing seven to expand the wide variety of topics in the field of molecular imaging. The interest groups joining the WMIS are “Synthetic Biology and Reporter Genes” (SyBRG) and “Molecular Imaging Nanotechnology and Theranostics” (MINT). WMIS interest groups are active communities of professionals in molecular imaging with shared interests, who aim to advance specific areas in molecular imaging (MI), set standards in the field, create networks of scientists, and move their areas of expertise forward to further develop and enrich the world of molecular imaging.

“Synthetic biology and molecular imaging are natural partners because as scientists engineer cellular therapies to treat various human diseases, it is imperative that they watch where these cells migrate in the body and assess what they do when they reach their target,” said Mikhail Shapiro, Ph.D., California Institute of Technology, founding Co-Chair, SyBRG-IG. “At the same time, the engineered cells themselves can be programmed to serve as diagnostic agents.”

The outreach of the interest groups seeks to engage research scientists, clinicians, drug developers, equipment manufacturers, and service providers to advance specific focus areas within the greater field of MI. The WMIS believes nurturing early concepts in the field advances scientific inquiry, drives drug discovery and development, and improves human health by expanding the molecular imaging footprint globally.

“While many of the WMIS members are using synthetic biology in their research, we believe that bringing them together, under one interest group, can promote interactions that will ultimately lead to new breakthroughs in developing more sensitive and more personalized molecular imaging tools,” said Assaf Gilad, Ph.D., Johns Hopkins University, founding Co-Chair, SyBRG-IG.

Nanotechnology and theranostics have been an integral part of the MI technology base and with the launch of MINT, this community of scientists will push the envelope of nanodrugs and combined imaging and therapy agents to address the most pressing unmet clinical needs.

“The field of nanotechnology recently has been exploding worldwide,” said Moritz Kircher, M.D., Ph.D., Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, founding Chair, MINT-IG. “The overarching goal of MINT is to enable the advancement and clinical translation of nanoparticle-based agents, for molecular imaging and theranostics applications. At the 2016 WMIC in New York, we aim to have an open kick-off event, where we will introduce the new interest group and showcase the latest developments in nanotechnology to the larger audience. This will be followed by a meeting of the founding members to discuss the bright future of nanotech in healthcare and further define the goals of MINT.”

The WMIS interest groups help identify emerging clinical and basic science areas that we designate as hot topics in the field of molecular imaging. Members of the interest groups contribute to the program of the annual WMIS meeting, the World Molecular Imaging Congress (WMIC), by selecting speakers at the cutting edge of these emerging areas of research.

“As president of the WMIS, I see the interest groups as the life blood of the society; they invigorate the community with new ideas and support the field with standardization and consistency,” said Christopher Contag, Ph.D., Professor, Stanford University and President, WMIS 2016. “The founding members of the new interest groups are among the most talented and energetic young investigators in our field, and I was pleased to work with them to create these new communities of accomplished scientists within our society. WMIS is well known for innovative thinking and early recognition of game changing ideas that create new opportunities for advancing science and revealing the cellular and molecular basis of human health and disease. The interest groups embrace this spirit of innovation and are defining the “firsts” in our field and its associated industries. This vanguard spirit will be apparent in every presentation and discussion at WMIC and will create a momentum that will be felt throughout the year.”

To learn more about SyBRG, MINT, and our other interest groups, please visit our website at [www.wmis.org](http://www.wmis.org). Join a WMIS Interest Group today and become involved in planning for WMIC 2016 sessions.

#### **ABOUT WORLD MOLECULAR IMAGING SOCIETY**

The WMIS is dedicated to developing and promoting translational research through multimodality molecular imaging. The education and abstract-driven WMIC is the annual meeting of the WMIS and is held in conjunction with partner societies including the European Society for Molecular Imaging (ESMI) and the Federation of Asian Societies for Molecular Imaging (FASMI). WMIC provides a unique setting for scientists and clinicians with very diverse backgrounds to interact, present, and follow cutting-edge advances in the rapidly expanding field of molecular imaging that impacts nearly every biomedical discipline. Industry exhibits at the congress included corporations who have created the latest advances in preclinical and clinical imaging approaches and equipment, providing a complete molecular imaging educational technology showcase. For more information: [www.wmis.org](http://www.wmis.org)

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