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### **Dicerna Co-Founder and Scientific Advisory Board Chair Awarded the 2008 Cozzarelli Prize by the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences Editorial Board**

**Watertown, Mass., April 27, 2009** –Dicerna Pharmaceuticals, Inc. ([www.dicerna.com](http://www.dicerna.com)), a second generation RNA interference company developing novel therapeutics utilizing its proprietary Dicer Substrate Technology™, announced today that John Rossi, Ph.D., scientific co-founder of Dicerna and scientific advisory board chair, as well as chair of the Department of Molecular Biology and dean of the Graduate School of Biological Sciences at City of Hope, has been awarded the 2008 Cozzarelli Prize by the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS) Editorial Board.

The Cozzarelli Prize recognizes recent articles published in PNAS that are cited for scientific excellence and originality. Papers receiving the 2008 Cozzarelli Prize were chosen from the 3,500 research articles published in PNAS during the course of the year and one research paper was selected from each of the six broadly defined classes under which the National Academy of Sciences is organized. The 2008 Cozzarelli Prize winners were recognized at the PNAS Editorial Board Meeting on April 26, 2009, in Washington, D.C. Dr. Rossi received the award in the Biological Sciences category for his work on a publication entitled, “MicroRNA-directed transcriptional gene silencing in mammalian cells” which appeared in the October 21, 2008 edition of PNAS.

“I am very pleased to receive the 2008 Cozzarelli Prize from the PNAS Editorial Board and I am honored to have our research acknowledged by this esteemed group,” said Dr. Rossi. “We believe that our research will allow us to better understand the role that microRNA plays in turning genes on and off and help us work towards developing targeted therapies for genetic diseases.”

“We congratulate John on this prestigious award and are thrilled that John’s groundbreaking work in the area of microRNA has been recognized by the PNAS Editorial Board,” said James Jenson, Ph.D., chief executive officer and co-founder, Dicerna Pharmaceuticals. “John’s research has played an integral role for Dicerna as we work to develop RNAi-targeted therapies in the areas of oncology and metabolic diseases.”

In the paper “MicroRNA-directed transcriptional gene silencing in mammalian cells,” Dr. Rossi and his colleagues found that microRNA, short segments of RNA, plays a larger part in turning on and off genes in the nucleus of cell at the beginning stages of gene expression than previously believed. MicroRNA acts as a regulator in cells and plays a role in keeping activated genes in control within the cell. Researchers also discovered that microRNA can target and silence genes in the nucleus of cells. Previous studies had shown the role of microRNA in controlling the amount of protein created through gene expression at the end of the gene expression process; this research established that microRNA has a part at the initial stages of gene expression.

### **About RNAi**

First described in plants and then in worms, flies and higher organisms, RNA interference (RNAi) is a key cellular mechanism regulating gene expression in both normal and disease processes. Dicer is a critical enzyme involved in the gene-silencing cascade. Dicer processing of double-stranded RNA oligonucleotides of 25 or more base pairs and hand-off to the gene-silencing complex (RISC) results in a five-to-10-fold more potent activity and longer duration of action.

### **About Dicerna**

Dicerna Pharmaceuticals is a private, venture-backed RNAi-focused biopharmaceutical company developing novel therapeutic agents in multiple disease areas based on its proprietary Dicer Substrate Technology platform. Dicerna is developing novel RNAi-based therapies, and related drug delivery systems, that use the engagement of the enzyme Dicer, which is an earlier step in the gene silencing process and a natural initiation point for the RNAi cascade. This distinct biological pathway demonstrates greater potency and a longer duration of action differentiating it from other RNAi approaches and results in the knockdown of expression of a targeted gene in a way that is highly selective and specific. The company believes that its Dicer Substrate Technology is based on intellectual property that is both broadly enabling and distinct from other IP in the field. Dicerna has exclusive, worldwide rights to the Dicer Substrate Technology and has the sole right to grant sublicenses to the full portfolio of Dicer Substrate intellectual property. Dicerna is based in Watertown, Massachusetts. For more information, please visit [www.dicerna.com](http://www.dicerna.com).

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