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For Immediate Release

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**ABBOTT LABORATORIES ENTERS AGREEMENT WITH ARTUS
GMBH FOR SARS DIAGNOSTIC TEST**

- Two-hour PCR test provides rapid detection of the SARS virus -

ABBOTT PARK, Ill., May 15, 2003 – Abbott Laboratories announced today a worldwide marketing and distribution agreement with German-based Artus GmbH for the first commercial test to detect a form of the coronavirus suspected of causing Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

Developed by Artus in collaboration with the Bernhard-Nocht-Institute for Tropical Medicine (BNI) in Hamburg, Germany, the test was introduced by Artus in April to countries in Asia and Europe and has been provided to laboratories under the direction of the World Health Organization (WHO) and other major clinical sites conducting studies on the SARS virus. Initial results of different sample types (sputum, swabs, stool and tissue) from these WHO laboratories are promising.

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The test is based on a highly sensitive technology known as polymerase chain reaction (PCR), which directly detects the virus in patient samples, and produces results in two hours.

"We now believe SARS is caused by a new form of the coronavirus, a relative of one of the many viruses that cause the common cold," said James Koziarz, Ph.D., vice president, diagnostic products research and development, Abbott Laboratories. "We believe this new test is sensitive enough to detect the virus in the early stages of infection."

Under the agreement, Artus will manufacture the test and, after appropriate regulatory approvals, Abbott will market and distribute it initially for use on the Roche LightCycler[®] thermal cycler system in the U.S., Canada, Germany, the U.K. and Austria, supplementing Artus' existing distribution agreements. Within several weeks, the test will also be available on the Applied Biosystems ABI Prism[®] 7000 Sequence Detection System for worldwide distribution. Abbott will assist Artus in submitting this test to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration as quickly as possible.

"Because of Artus' long-time experience with coronaviruses, we were able to develop the SARS test very quickly," said Michael Tillmann, managing director, Artus. "Through Abbott's strong distribution channels this important test can be made widely available to health care professionals and patients who urgently need it."

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Abbott will market and distribute the test through its molecular diagnostics alliance with Celera Diagnostics. That alliance, established in June 2002, is focused on developing and marketing a broad menu of next-generation molecular diagnostic products for unmet diagnostic needs. Celera Diagnostics, headquartered in Alameda, Calif., is a joint venture between two Applied Biosystems Corporation businesses, Applied Biosystems and Celera Genomics.

SARS is a respiratory illness that has recently been reported in Asia, North America, and Europe. In mid April, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced that the genome for the coronavirus believed to be responsible for the global epidemic of SARS had been sequenced. According to the CDC, the illness usually begins with a fever, which is sometimes associated with chills or other symptoms, including headache, cough, general feeling of discomfort and body aches. The primary way that SARS appears to spread is by close person-to-person contact.

For more than two decades, Abbott has been a global leader in developing and introducing tests for infectious diseases. In 1985, Abbott developed and introduced the world's first test for HIV antibodies and, subsequently, brought a number of important tests to market including rapid tests for HIV; the first HIV-1/HIV-2 combination test; and blood screening and diagnostic tests for various hepatitis viruses. Today, Abbott's tests and instruments protect a significant percentage of the world's blood supply from HIV and hepatitis, screen blood samples for workplace substance-abuse, measure disease progress, and help millions of people with diabetes around the world monitor and manage their blood glucose levels. Through its Vysis subsidiary and its exclusive alliance with Celera Diagnostics, Abbott also offers a broad range of *in vitro* molecular diagnostic products for disease detection, disease progression monitoring and therapy selection.

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About Artus GmbH

Artus GmbH is a successful biotechnology company based in Hamburg, Germany, with subsidiaries in Malaysia and the U.S. Established as a spin-off of the Bernhard-Nocht-Institute for Tropical Medicine in 1998, Artus has an experienced team of medical scientists, microbiologists, and molecular biologists. Artus is one of the first companies world-wide to offer a broad range of licensed real-time PCR kits for pathogen detection applying PCR in the fields of human diagnostics, veterinary medicine and biotechnology. Having been granted the license for commercial distribution of PCR in January 2002, Artus is entitled to produce and sell diagnostic PCR kits for the diagnosis of herpes viruses, tropical infection diseases and relevant pathogens for veterinary medicine. Additional pathogen detection kits will follow this summer. Artus develops and produces all PCR kits according to the highest quality standards and has just released the first CE-marked real-time PCR kit in Europe for detection of herpes simplex virus (HSV) in human diagnostics.

Additional information about Artus and its products can be found on the company's web site at www.artus-biotech.com

About Abbott Laboratories

Abbott Laboratories is a global, broad-based health care company devoted to the discovery, development, manufacture and marketing of pharmaceuticals, nutritionals, and medical products, including devices and diagnostics. The company employs approximately 70,000 people and markets its products in more than 130 countries.

Abbott's news releases and other information are available on the company's Web site at www.abbott.com.