Hesperos Featured in *The New Gold Standard* at Bipartisan Capitol Hill Screening on the Future of Human-Relevant Drug Development

Documentary examines the scientific shift toward New Approach Methodologies and reduced reliance on animal testing

Hesperos joins NIH's Dr. Warren Casey for post-screening discussion following opening remarks from Senators Cory Booker and Rand Paul

WASHINGTON, D.C., Nov. 24, 2026 –Hesperos Inc. today highlighted key takeaways after participating in a Capitol Hill presentation of *The New Gold Standard: Cutting Edge Science That's Replacing Animal Testing*, a feature documentary examining how human-relevant technologies are transforming drug discovery and safety testing.

Produced by filmmaker Steven Latham and narrated and executive produced by Maggie Q, *The New Gold Standard* features Hesperos in a dedicated segment showcasing its work in Human-on-a-Chip® microphysiological systems as emerging New Approach Methodologies (NAMs) for drug development. The documentary examines the scientific, regulatory and policy transition toward technologies designed to more directly model human biology while reducing reliance on animal testing.

The November 18 event at the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center was hosted by the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine and the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health Toxicology Policy Laboratory. Opening remarks from U.S. Senators Cory Booker (D-N.J.) and Rand Paul (R-Ky.) emphasized that reducing reliance on animal testing and improving the safety and efficacy of medicines are complementary goals. Both pointed to advances in human-relevant methods as an opportunity to modernize drug development and move toward a system without animal testing. A peer-reviewed analysis estimated that nearly 80 million animals were used in scientific procedures worldwide in 2015.[1]

As part of the event, James Hickman, Hesperos Chief Scientist, joined Warren Casey, Ph.D., Director of the Office of Research Innovation, Validation, and Application (ORIVA) at the National Institutes of Health, Johns Hopkins' Dr. Paul Locke, GATC Health's Chief Business Officer Tyrone Lam, *The New Gold Standard* filmmaker Steven Latham, Vanda Pharmaceutical's Chief Executive Officer Mihael Polymeropoulos, M.D., and journalist Melanie Kaplan, for a discussion on what is required to move NAMs from promising innovations into standard pharmaceutical practice.

While panelists noted that NAMs can compress development timelines, lower R&D costs, and open new avenues for rare disease treatments, Dr. Hickman emphasized that entrenched regulatory habits and mismatched resource allocation remain major hurdles.

"Reducing reliance on animal testing is widely recognized as a priority, but conversation alone will not shift decades of entrenched practice," said James Hickman, Ph.D., Chief Scientist at Hesperos. "If we want New Approach Methodologies to move from promising science to routine drug

development, funding has to match that prioritization, backing the validation, infrastructure, and regulatory adoption needed to make human-relevant testing the standard."

Bridging Capitol Hill discussions into active development workflows is the focus of Hesperos' recently announced collaboration with GATC Health. The partnership integrates Hesperos' Human-on-a-Chip® systems with GATC's Operon® AI platform to create an integrated NAMs workflow that pairs in silico prediction with functional testing in interconnected human cellular models.

Under the program, Operon's computational models will predict biological activity and potential off-target effects, beginning with GATC-1021, GATC's non-opioid drug candidate in development for opioid use disorder. Hesperos will test those predictions using human neural, cardiac, and hepatic cellular models. The resulting functional data are intended to contribute to the nonclinical evidence supporting GATC's planned Investigational New Drug (IND) application and to provide a real-world case study of how complementary NAM technologies can be integrated within drug development.

"The New Gold Standard captures how far Human-on-a-Chip® technology has come in modeling complex human biology, and our collaboration with GATC Health puts that capability to work in an active drug development program," added Hickman. "By pairing GATC's Operon® AI predictions with functional testing across our interconnected human cellular models, we are tackling one of the field's most practical challenges: generating the rigorous, regulatory-ready human evidence needed to support an IND submission.*"*

The Capitol Hill screening reflects accelerating federal alignment around NAM technologies. Alongside recent FDA initiatives to expand the appropriate use of non-animal methods in drug development, the NIH has increased investment in human-relevant platforms and established ORIVA to coordinate efforts to develop, validate and expand adoption of approaches including tissue chips, organoids and computational models.

The New Gold Standard will become available for streaming in early 2027. For more information: TheNewGoldStandard.film and Facebook.com/TheNewGoldStandardFilm

Watch Trailer Here

[1] Taylor K, Rego Alvarez L. An Estimate of the Number of Animals Used for Scientific Purposes Worldwide in 2015. Alternatives to Laboratory Animals. 2019;47(5–6):196–213. doi:10.1177/0261192919899853.

About *The New Gold Standard*

The New Gold Standard: Cutting Edge Science That's Replacing Animal Testing is a feature documentary produced by Steven Latham Productions and narrated and executive produced by Maggie Q. The film examines the emergence of human-based research technologies and the scientific, regulatory, ethical and economic questions surrounding the transition toward research approaches designed to better reflect human biology. The documentary is expected to become available for streaming in early 2027.

About Hesperos, Inc.

Hesperos is a global contract research organization (CRO) specializing in preclinical drug development services utilizing its Human-on-a-Chip® platform. By replicating key aspects of human biology (and thus avoiding expensive, time-consuming, and often less informative animal testing), Human-on-a-Chip® organ-system models provide product development teams with more meaningful insights that can accurately predict an agent's therapeutic profile while lowering costs and accelerating development timelines. For more information, visit www.hesperosinc.com.

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