



BIOCRYST ELECTS JOHN L. HIGGINS TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Birmingham, Alabama - May 18, 2004 - BioCryst Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (Nasdaq NM: BCRX) today announced that John L. Higgins was elected to the company's board of directors at the 2004 Annual Meeting. Mr. Higgins is currently Executive Vice President, Finance and Administration and Corporate Development, and Chief Financial Officer of Connetics Corporation, a specialty pharmaceutical company focused on the development and commercialization of innovative therapeutics for the dermatology market.

Mr. Higgins, who joined Connetics in 1997, has held positions of increasing responsibility in finance, administration and corporate development. Before joining Connetics, Mr. Higgins served as Executive Vice President, Corporate Development at BioCryst, where his management responsibilities included all financing activities, licensing and agreements, strategic planning, investor relations and corporate communications. Before joining BioCryst in 1994, Mr. Higgins was a member of the healthcare investment banking team at Dillon, Read & Co. Inc. Mr. Higgins currently serves as a director of a private software company. Mr. Higgins received his A.B. in Economics, Magna Cum Laude, from Colgate University in 1992.

"We are pleased to have John join BioCryst's board," said Charles E. Bugg, Ph.D., Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of BioCryst. "John's extensive experience in finance and business development at biopharmaceutical companies, combined with his personal understanding of BioCryst, brings a unique and valuable perspective to our board. As our pipeline of products in development continues to grow, we are sure that John will make meaningful contributions to our ultimate success in bringing our products for cancer, cardiovascular, autoimmune diseases and viral infections to patients as quickly as possible."

BioCryst Pharmaceuticals, Inc. designs, optimizes and develops novel drugs that block key enzymes essential for cancer, cardiovascular and autoimmune diseases, and viral infections. BioCryst integrates the necessary disciplines of biology, crystallography, medicinal chemistry and computer modeling to effectively use structure-based drug design to discover and develop small molecule pharmaceuticals. BioCryst's lead product candidate, forodesine hydrochloride (BCX-1777), an inhibitor of purine nucleoside phosphorylase (PNP), is currently in a Phase IIa trial for patients with T-cell malignancies with additional Phase IIa trials planned for hematologic malignancies, and other refractory cancers. A second generation PNP inhibitor, BCX-4208, is in preclinical development with plans to file an IND during 2004. In addition, BioCryst has several new enzyme targets in drug discovery including tissue factor/factor VIIa and hepatitis C polymerase. For more information about BioCryst, please visit the company's web site at www.biocryst.com.

These statements involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors which may cause our actual results, performance or achievements to be materially different from any future results, performances or achievements expressed or implied by the forward-looking statements. These statements reflect our current views with respect to future events and are based on assumptions and subject to risks and uncertainties. Given these uncertainties, you should not place undue reliance on these forward-looking statements. Some of the factors that could affect the forward-looking statements contained herein include that we may not be able to enroll the required number of subjects in clinical trials of forodesine hydrochloride, that the results of the clinical trials of forodesine hydrochloride may not be positive, that the results from the Phase I studies of forodesine hydrochloride may not be replicated in future studies or larger patient populations, that that we may not be able to continue future development of forodesine hydrochloride, BCX-4208 or any of our other current development programs including tissue factor/factor VIIa and hepatitis C polymerase, that forodesine hydrochloride or our other development programs may never result in future product, license or royalty payments being received by BioCryst, that our product development programs for cancer, cardiovascular, autoimmune diseases and viral infections may not show positive results in the time frames we currently expect or at all, that BioCryst may not have sufficient cash to continue funding the development, manufacturing, marketing or distribution of its products and that additional funding, if necessary, may not be available at all or on terms acceptable to BioCryst. Please refer to the documents BioCryst files periodically with the Securities and Exchange Commission, specifically BioCryst's most recent Annual Report on Form 10-K which identify important factors that could cause the actual results to differ materially from those contained in the projections or forward-looking statements.