

**NitroMed Announces Interim Analysis of A-HeFT Trial;
Planned Interim Safety Analysis Conducted**

*Independent Data Safety and Monitoring Board Recommends Trial Continue as Planned; Next
Safety Review to Be Conducted in Mid-Summer 2004*

Bedford, MA - (March 16, 2004) - NitroMed, Inc. (Nasdaq: NTMD), an emerging pharmaceutical company developing nitric oxide-enhancing medicines, today announced that an independent Data Safety and Monitoring Board (DSMB) completed its planned, third safety analysis of the Company's confirmatory Phase III randomized, double-blind, placebo controlled trial of BiDil(R), the Company's lead product in development for the treatment of African American patients with heart failure. The DSMB found no safety concerns that would require protocol changes and recommended that the trial continue.

In a letter dated March 15, 2004 to the Company, David L. DeMets, Ph.D., Chairman of the DSMB and Professor and Chair, Department of Biostatistics and Medical Informatics at the University of Wisconsin Medical School, stated,

- "(The DSMB) recommends that A-HeFT continue; there are no safety concerns that would require any protocol changes at this time."
- "(The DSMB) commends the A-HeFT team for their success in recruitment and conducting a high quality trial. Compliance is excellent, patients are receiving excellent background treatment for heart failure and follow up to date also appears good."
- "(The DSMB) recommends that one additional safety review be conducted by conference call sometime between this meeting and the end of patient follow up. ... (The DSMB) recommends that this review be scheduled for sometime in mid-summer, towards the end of July or the beginning of August."

In order to protect the integrity of the clinical trial, the Company remains blinded to the data. The DSMB conducted the interim safety analysis on data from more than 800 patients enrolled in the trial, which included information on adverse events including death, hospitalizations and other clinical events; patient compliance with trial medication; and concomitant medications taken by the patients. The DSMB will analyze similar up-dated data in its next meeting in mid-summer of 2004. No further data or information was requested by the DSMB for this meeting.

The clinical trial known as the African American Heart Failure Trial (A-HeFT) is taking place in more than 160 sites throughout the United States and is enrolling 1,100 African American men and women with moderate and severe heart failure. Patients are randomized to either BiDil or placebo in addition to their current medications for the treatment of their heart failure. The trial is evaluating the effect of BiDil in addition to current therapies to reduce mortality and hospitalizations, and improve quality of life.

The DSMB is an independent panel of experts in cardiovascular medicine, statistics and medical ethics who are not participating in NitroMed's clinical trial, but whose primary responsibility is to oversee the study and safeguard the interests of current and future patients in the trial. The DSMB periodically reviews interim analyses of outcome data and side effect summaries to determine whether the clinical trial should continue as originally designed, should be changed, or should be closed early based on these data. Strict confidentiality is maintained by the DSMB. The Company is not privileged to the data or the DSMB's review of it.

About NitroMed, Inc.

NitroMed is an emerging pharmaceutical company that discovers, develops and seeks to commercialize proprietary pharmaceuticals based on the therapeutic benefits of the naturally occurring molecule nitric oxide. The Company uses its expertise in nitric oxide biology and chemistry in an effort to develop both novel drugs, as well as safer, more effective versions of existing drugs. Research and development efforts focus on major diseases that are characterized by a deficiency in nitric oxide, such as cardiovascular and inflammatory diseases. BiDil(R), the Company's lead product in development, is an orally administered nitric oxide-enhancing medicine being investigated for the treatment of heart failure in African Americans. A late-stage confirmatory trial targeted to enroll 1,100 patients is underway in more than 160 sites throughout

the United States. The Association of Black Cardiologists is a joint sponsor of the study. Collaborative partnerships are a key element of the Company's business strategy. NitroMed has agreements with Merck to jointly develop nitric oxide-based COX-2 inhibitors and with Boston Scientific to jointly develop nitric oxide coated cardiovascular stents.

Forward Looking Statements

Any statements in this press release about future expectations, plans and prospects for the Company, including statements regarding the Company's timeline for completing clinical trials and seeking to obtain regulatory approval for BiDil(R), as well as statements containing the words "believes," "anticipates," "plans," "expects," "will," and similar expressions, constitute forward-looking statements within the meaning of The Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Actual results may differ materially from those indicated by such forward-looking statements as a result of various important factors, including risks relating to: difficulties or delays relating to obtaining required regulatory approvals to develop, market and sell BiDil(R); the Company's ability to successfully complete clinical trials of BiDil(R); the Company's dependence on corporate collaborators to develop, manufacture, market and sell products based upon its technologies; the Company's failure to obtain or maintain intellectual property protection and required licenses for its technologies and products under development; the Company's ability to obtain the substantial additional funding required to conduct research and development, manufacturing, marketing and sales of its products under development; and other factors discussed in its Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended September 30, 2003 and other filings that it periodically makes with the SEC. In addition, the forward-looking statements included in this press release represent the Company's views as of the date of this release. The Company anticipates that subsequent events and developments will cause the Company's views to change. However, while the Company may elect to update these forward-looking statements at some point in the future, the Company specifically disclaims any obligation to do so. These forward-looking statements should not be relied upon as representing the Company's views as of any date subsequent to the date of this release.