**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE NASDAQ: CRME TSX: COM**

# NEW DRUG APPLICATION SUBMITTED FOR RSD1235

**Vancouver, Canada and Deerfield, Illinois, USA, March 31, 2006** -- Cardiome Pharma Corp. (NASDAQ: CRME / TSX: COM) and its co-development partner Astellas Pharma US, Inc. today announced Astellas' submission of a New Drug Application (NDA) to the United States Food & Drug Administration (FDA) seeking approval to market the intravenous formulation of RSD1235, an investigational new drug for the acute conversion of atrial fibrillation.

The NDA is based on a 5-year clinical development program for RSD1235 (iv), which, upon approval, will be marketed in the United States by Astellas Pharma US, Inc., a US subsidiary of Astellas Pharma Inc. The trade name for the marketed product has not yet been determined.

"The submission of this NDA represents the culmination of years of clinical development effort, and is certainly the most exciting milestone we have yet achieved as a company," stated Bob Rieder, Chief Executive Officer of Cardiome. "I would like to thank all of the Cardiome and Astellas employees who have worked so hard to ensure that this NDA was submitted as planned."

"With the timely submission of this NDA, we have taken another important step in the development process of RSD1235," stated William E. Fitzsimmons, Pharm.D., Senior Vice President, Business Development of Astellas. "The collaborative efforts that Cardiome and Astellas put forth to achieve this goal are the result of a successful partnership with a mutual commitment to success."

In October 2003, Cardiome granted Astellas an exclusive license to develop and commercialize the intravenous formulation of RSD1235 in North America. The companies have co-developed RSD1235 (iv) to NDA, with Astellas responsible for 75% of development costs. Cardiome has retained all rights to the intravenous formulations outside of Canada, U.S. and Mexico, and has also retained worldwide rights to oral RSD1235 for the prevention of atrial fibrillation.

Atrial fibrillation, the most common cardiac arrhythmia, is an abnormal heart rhythm that affects the upper chambers of the heart, lowering the heart's pumping capacity. Immediate symptoms are breathlessness and fatigue. Long-term effects include increased risk of both stroke and congestive heart failure.

**About Cardiome Pharma Corp.**
Cardiome Pharma Corp. is a product-focused cardiovascular drug development company with two clinical drug programs focused on atrial arrhythmia (intravenous and oral dosing), and a pre-clinical program directed at improving cardiovascular function.

RSD1235 (iv) is the intravenous formulation of an investigational drug being evaluated for the acute conversion of atrial fibrillation (AF). Positive top-line results from two pivotal Phase 3 trials for RSD1235 (iv), called ACT 1 and ACT 3, were released in December 2004 and September 2005. A New Drug Application (NDA) for RSD1235 (iv) was submitted to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in March 2006. An additional Phase 3 study evaluating patients with post-operative atrial arrhythmia, called ACT 2, and an open-label safety study evaluating recent-onset AF patients, called ACT 4, are ongoing.

RSD1235 (oral) is being investigated as a chronic-use oral drug for the maintenance of normal heart rhythm following termination of AF. A Phase 2a pilot study for RSD1235 (oral) was initiated in December 2005.

Cardiome recently completed the acquisition of Artesian Therapeutics Inc., a privately held U.S. biopharmaceutical company developing bi-functional small-molecule drugs for the treatment of cardiovascular disease.

Cardiome is traded on the Toronto Stock Exchange (COM) and the NASDAQ National Market (CRME). Further information about Cardiome can be found at www.cardiome.com.

**About Astellas**

Astellas Pharma US, Inc., a US subsidiary of Tokyo-based Astellas Pharma Inc., is a research-based pharmaceutical company dedicated to improving the health of people around the world through the provision of innovative and reliable pharmaceutical products. Established on April 1, 2005, the company was formed through a merger that combined the outstanding research, development and marketing capabilities of Fujisawa Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd. and Yamanouchi Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd. Astellas ranks among the top 20 pharmaceutical companies in the world and will continue to grow as a competitive company in the world pharmaceutical market. For more information on Astellas Pharma US, Inc., go to www.astellas.com/us.

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