



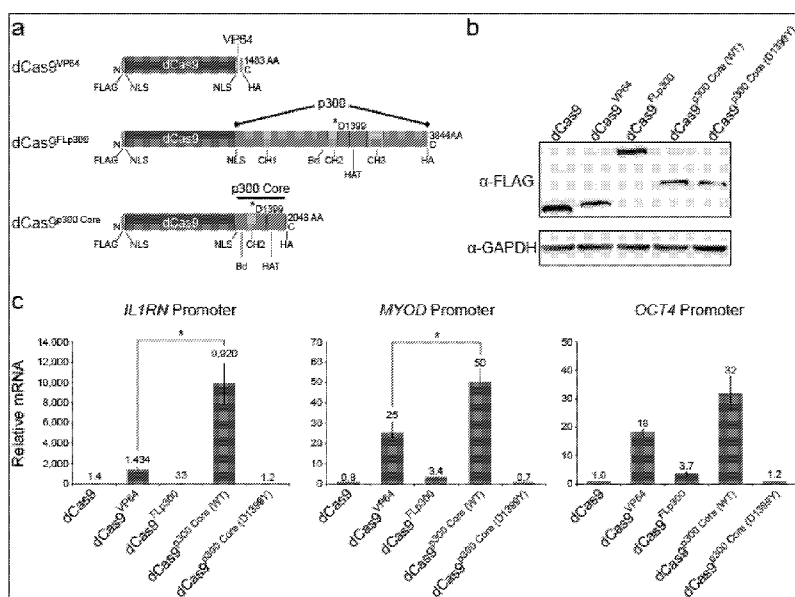
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(54) **Title:** COMPOSITIONS AND METHODS FOR EPIGENOME EDITING

(57) **Abstract:** Disclosed herein are CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation systems that include a fusion protein of a Cas9 protein and a protein having histone acetyltransferase activity, and methods of using said systems.

COMPOSITIONS AND METHODS FOR EPIGENOME EDITING

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims priority to U.S. Provisional Application No. 62/113,569, filed February 9, 2015, which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

STATEMENT OF GOVERNMENT INTEREST

[0002] This invention was made with Government support under Federal Grant No. 1R01DA036865 awarded by the National Institutes of Health. The Government has certain rights to this invention.

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0003] The present disclosure is directed to CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation systems and methods of using said systems.

BACKGROUND

[0004] The Human Genome Project was funded and pursued based on the premise that the sequencing of the human genome would reveal the genetic basis for complex diseases that have a strong inheritable component, including cardiovascular disease, neurodegenerative conditions, and metabolic diseases such as diabetes. It was believed that this information would lead to new drug targets for these widespread diseases. However, thousands of genome-wide association studies (GWAS) have shown that the genetic variation associated with these complex diseases does not occur within genes, but rather in intergenic regulatory regions that control the levels of particular genes. Similarly, approximately 20% of Mendelian disorders do not have a detectable coding mutation, suggesting that the causal mutation is in a gene regulatory element. Importantly, it is very difficult to assign functional roles to these regulatory elements as they often are located in distant locations from their target genes. Moreover, many genes and regulatory elements fall into each positive hit of each GWAS study. In fact, follow-up projects to the Human Genome Project, such as the NIH-funded Encyclopedia of DNA Elements

(ENCODE) and the Roadmap Epigenomics Project, have identified millions of putative regulatory elements across the human genome for many human cell types and tissues.

[0005] A primary challenge of functional genomics is to develop technologies that directly and precisely manipulate genome function at individual loci. Projects such as ENCODE and the Roadmap Epigenomics Project have identified millions of epigenetic marks across the human genome for many human cell types and tissues. Studying the function of those marks, however, has been largely limited to statistical associations with gene expression. Technologies for targeted direct manipulation of these epigenetic properties are necessary to transform such association-based findings into mechanistic principles of gene regulation. Such advances have the potential to benefit human health, as they could lead to gene therapies that modify the epigenetic code at targeted regions of the genome, strategies for regenerative medicine and disease modeling based on the epigenetic reprogramming of cell lineage specification, and the engineering of epigenome-specific drug screening platforms.

[0006] Manipulation of the epigenome is possible by treating cells with small molecule drugs, such as inhibitors of histone deacetylases or DNA methyltransferases, or differentiating cells into specific lineages. However, small molecule-based methods globally alter the epigenome and transcriptome, and are not suitable for targeting individual loci. Epigenome editing technologies, including the fusion of epigenome-modifying enzymes to programmable DNA-binding proteins such as zinc finger proteins and transcription activator-like effectors (TALEs), have been effective at achieving targeted DNA methylation, DNA hydroxymethylation, and histone demethylation, methylation, and deacetylation.

[0007] Fused to activation domains, such as oligomers of the herpes simplex viral protein 16 (VP16), dCas9 can function as a synthetic transcriptional regulator. However, limitations in the use of dCas9 activators remain, including the need for multiple activation domains or combinations of gRNAs to achieve high levels of gene induction by synergistic effects between activation domains. The conventional activator domains used in these engineered transcriptional factors, such as the VP16 tetramer VP64, function as a scaffold for recruiting multiple components of the preinitiation complex and do not have direct enzymatic function to specifically modulate the chromatin state. This indirect method of epigenetic remodeling does not allow for testing the role of specific epigenetic marks and may not be as potent as the direct

programming of epigenetic states. There remains a need for the ability to target direct manipulation of epigenetic properties.

SUMMARY

[0008] The present invention is directed to a fusion protein comprising two heterologous polypeptide domains, wherein the first polypeptide domain comprises a Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats associated (Cas) protein and the second polypeptide domain

[0009] The present invention is directed to a DNA targeting system comprising the fusion protein, described above, and at least one guide RNA (gRNA).

[0010] The present invention is directed to a method of activating gene expression of a target gene in a cell, the method comprising contacting the cell with a polynucleotide encoding a DNA targeting system, wherein the DNA targeting system comprises the fusion protein, described above, and at least one guide RNA (gRNA).

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0011] FIGS. 1A-1C show that dCas9^{p300 Core} fusion protein activates transcription of endogenous genes from proximal promoter regions. FIG. 1A shows a schematic of dCas9 fusion proteins dCas9^{VP64}, dCas9^{FL p300}, and dCas9^{p300 Core}. *Streptococcus pyogenes* dCas9 contains nuclease inactivating mutations D10A and H840A. The D1399 catalytic residue in the p300 HAT domain is indicated. FIG. 1B shows Western blot showing expression levels of dCas9 fusion proteins and GAPDH in co-transfected cells (full blot shown in FIG. 7C). FIG. 1C shows relative mRNA expression of *ILIRN*, *MYOD*, and *OCT4*, determined by qRT-PCR, by the indicated dCas9 fusion protein co-transfected with four gRNAs targeted to each promoter region (Tukey-test, **P*-value < 0.05, n = 3 independent experiments each, error bars: s.e.m.). Numbers above bars indicate mean expression. FLAG, epitope tag; NLS, nuclear localization signal; HA, hemagglutinin epitope tag; CH, cysteine-histidine-rich region; Bd, bromodomain; HAT, histone acetyltransferase domain.

[0012] FIGS. 2A-2C show that dCas9^{p300 Core} fusion protein activates transcription of endogenous genes from distal enhancer regions. FIG. 2A shows relative *MYOD* mRNA production in cells co-transfected with a pool of gRNAs targeted to either the proximal or distal

regulatory regions and dCas9^{VP64} or dCas9^{p300 Core}; promoter data from FIG. 1C (Tukey-test, **P*-value <0.05 compared to mock-transfected cells, Tukey test †*P*-value <0.05 between dCas9^{p300 Core} and dCas9^{VP64}, *n* = 3 independent experiments, error bars: s.e.m.). The human *MYOD* locus is schematically depicted with corresponding gRNA locations in red. CE, MyoD core enhancer; DRR, MyoD distal regulatory region. FIG. 2B shows relative *OCT4* mRNA production in cells co-transfected with a pool of gRNAs targeted to the proximal and distal regulatory regions and dCas9^{VP64} or dCas9^{p300 Core}; promoter data from FIG. 1C (Tukey-test, **P*-value <0.05 compared to mock-transfected cells, Tukey test †*P*-value <0.05 between dCas9^{p300 Core} and dCas9^{VP64}, *n* = 3 independent experiments, error bars: s.e.m.). The human *OCT4* locus is schematically depicted with corresponding gRNA locations in red. DE, Oct4 distal enhancer; PE, Oct4 proximal enhancer. FIG. 2C shows the human β -globin locus is schematically depicted with approximate locations of the hypersensitive site 2 (HS2) enhancer region and downstream genes (*HBE*, *HBG*, *HBD*, and *HBB*). Corresponding HS2 gRNA locations are shown in red. Relative mRNA production from distal genes in cells co-transfected with four gRNAs targeted to the HS2 enhancer and the indicated dCas9 proteins. Note logarithmic y-axis and dashed red line indicating background expression (Tukey test among conditions for each β -globin gene, †*P*-value <0.05, *n* = 3 independent experiments, error bars: s.e.m.). n.s., not significant.

[0013] FIGS. 3A-3C show that dCas9^{p300 Core} targeted transcriptional activation is specific and robust. FIGS. 3A-3C show MA plots generated from DEseq2 analysis of genome-wide RNA-seq data from HEK293T cells transiently co-transfected with dCas9^{VP64} (FIG. 3A) dCas9^{p300 Core} (FIG. 3B) or dCas9^{p300 Core (D1399Y)} (FIG. 3C) and four *ILIRN* promoter-targeting gRNAs compared to HEK293T cells transiently co-transfected with dCas9 and four *ILIRN* promoter-targeting gRNAs. mRNAs corresponding to *ILIRN* isoforms are shown in blue and circled in each of FIGS. 3A-3C. Red labeled points in FIGS. 3B and 3C correspond to off-target transcripts significantly enriched after multiple hypothesis testing (*KDR*, (FDR = 1.4×10^{-3}); *FAM49A*, (FDR = 0.04); *p300*, (FDR = 1.7×10^{-4}) in FIG. 3B; and *p300*, (FDR = 4.4×10^{-10}) in FIG. 3C.

[0014] FIGS. 4A-4D show that dCas9^{p300 Core} fusion protein acetylates chromatin at a targeted enhancer and corresponding downstream genes. FIG. 4A shows the region encompassing the human β -globin locus on chromosome 11 (5,304,000 – 5,268,000; GRCh37/hg19 assembly) is shown. HS2 gRNA target locations are indicated in red and ChIP-qPCR amplicon regions are

depicted in black with corresponding green numbers. ENCODE/Broad Institute H3K27ac enrichment signal in K562 cells is shown for comparison. Magnified insets for the HS2 enhancer, *HBE*, and *HBG1/2* promoter regions are displayed below. FIGS. 4B-4D show H3K27ac ChIP-qPCR enrichment (relative to dCas9; red dotted line) at the HS2 enhancer, *HBE* promoter, and *HBG1/2* promoters in cells co-transfected with four gRNAs targeted to the HS2 enhancer and the indicated dCas9 fusion protein. *HBG* ChIP amplicons 1 and 2 amplify redundant sequences at the *HBG1* and *HBG2* promoters (denoted by ‡). Tukey test among conditions for each ChIP-qPCR region, **P*-value <0.05 (*n* = 3 independent experiments, error bars: s.e.m.).

[0015] FIGS. 5A-5E show that dCas9^{p300 Core} fusion protein activates transcription of endogenous genes from regulatory regions with a single gRNA. Relative *IL1RN* (FIG. 5A), *MYOD* (FIG. 5B) or *OCT4* (FIG. 5C) mRNA produced from cells co-transfected with dCas9^{p300 Core} or dCas9^{VP64} and gRNAs targeting respective promoters (*n* = 3 independent experiments, error bars: s.e.m.). Relative *MYOD* (FIG. 5D) or *OCT4* (FIG. 5E) mRNA produced from cells co-transfected with dCas9^{p300 Core} and indicated gRNAs targeting the indicated *MYOD* or *OCT4* enhancers (*n* = 3 independent experiments, error bars: s.e.m.). DRR, *MYOD* distal regulatory region; CE, *MYOD* core enhancer; PE, *OCT4* proximal enhancer; DE, *OCT4* distal enhancer. (Tukey test between dCas9^{p300 Core} and single *OCT4* DE gRNAs compared to mock-transfected cells, **P*-value <0.05, Tukey test among dCas9^{p300 Core} and *OCT4* DE gRNAs compared to All, †*P*-value <0.05,). Relative *HBE* (FIG. 5F) or *HBG* (FIG. 5G) mRNA production in cells co-transfected with dCas9^{p300 Core} and the indicated gRNAs targeted to the HS2 enhancer (Tukey test between dCas9^{p300 Core} and single HS2 gRNAs compared to mock-transfected cells, **P*-value <0.05, Tukey test among dCas9^{p300 Core} and HS2 single gRNAs compared to All, †*P* <0.05, *n* = 3 independent experiments, error bars: s.e.m.). HS2, β -globin locus control region hypersensitive site 2; n.s., not significant using Tukey test.

[0016] FIGS. 6A-6I show that the p300 Core can be targeted to genomic loci by diverse programmable DNA-binding proteins. FIG. 6A shows schematic of the *Neisseria meningitidis* (*Nm*) dCas9 fusion proteins *Nm*-dCas9^{VP64} and *Nm*-dCas9^{p300 Core}. *Neisseria meningitidis* dCas9 contains nuclease-inactivating mutations D16A, D587A, H588A, and N611A. FIG. 6B-6C show relative (FIG. 6B) *HBE* or (FIG. 6C) *HBG* mRNA in cells co-transfected with five individual or pooled (A-E) *Nm* gRNAs targeted to the *HBE* or *HBG* promoter and *Nm*-dCas9^{VP64} or *Nm*-

dCas9^{p300 Core}. FIGS. 6D-6E Relative *HBE* (FIG. 6D) or *HBG* (FIG. 6E) mRNA in cells co-transfected with five individual or pooled (A–E) *Nm* gRNAs targeted to the HS2 enhancer and *Nm*-dCas9^{VP64} or *Nm*-dCas9^{p300 Core}. FIG. 6F shows schematic of TALEs with domains containing *ILIRN*-targeted repeat variable diresidues (Repeat Domain). FIG. 6G shows relative *ILIRN* mRNA in cells transfected with individual or pooled (A–D) *ILIRN* TALE^{VP64} or *ILIRN* TALE^{p300 Core} encoding plasmids. FIG. 6H shows schematic of ZF fusion proteins with zinc finger helices 1–6 (F1–F6) targeting the *ICAM1* promoter. FIG. 6I shows relative *ICAM1* mRNA in cells transfected with *ICAM1* ZF^{VP64} or *ICAM1* ZF^{p300 Core}. Tukey-test, **P*-value < 0.05 compared to mock-transfected control, n = 3 independent experiments each, error bars: s.e.m. NLS, nuclear localization signal; HA, hemagglutinin tag; Bd, bromodomain; CH, cysteine-histidine-rich region; HAT, histone acetyltransferase domain.

[0017] FIGS. 7A-7C show dCas9^{p300 Core} mutant fusion protein activities. FIG. 7A shows schematic depiction of the WT dCas9^{p300 Core} fusion protein and p300 Core mutant derivatives. Relative locations of mutated amino acids are displayed as yellow bars within the p300 Core effector domain. FIG. 7B shows dCas9^{p300 Core} variants were transiently co-transfected with four *ILIRN* promoter gRNAs and were screened for hyperactivity¹ (amino acid 1645/1646 RR/EE and C1204R mutations) or hypoactivity (denoted by ‡) via mRNA production from the *ILIRN* locus (top panel, n=2 independent experiments, error bars: s.e.m.). Experiments were performed in duplicate with one well used for RNA isolation and the other for western blotting to validate expression (bottom panels). The nitrocellulose membrane was cut and incubated with α-FLAG primary antibody (top, Sigma-Aldrich cat.# F7425) or α-GAPDH (bottom, Cell Signaling Technology cat.# 14C10) then α-Rabbit HRP secondary antibody (Sigma-Aldrich cat.# A6154). FIG. 7C shows full membranes from western blot shown in main text (FIG. 1B). The nitrocellulose membrane was cut and incubated with α-FLAG primary antibody (top, Sigma-Aldrich cat.# F7425) or α-GAPDH (bottom, Cell Signaling Technology cat.# 14C10) then α-Rabbit HRP secondary antibody (Sigma-Aldrich cat.# A6154). Membrane was imaged for the indicated durations after careful re-alignment of trimmed pieces.

[0018] FIG. 8 shows target gene activation is unaffected by overexpression of synthetic dCas9 fusion proteins.

[0019] FIGS. 9A-9E show a comparison of *Sp.* dCas9 and *Nm.* dCas9 gene induction from the HS2 enhancer with individual and pooled gRNAs. FIG. 9A shows schematic display of the

human β -globin locus including *Streptococcus pyogenes* dCas9 (*Sp.* dCas9) and *Neisseria meningitidis* dCas9 (*Nm.* dCas9) gRNA locations at the HS2 enhancer. Layered transcription profiles scaled to a vertical viewing range of 8 from nine ENCODE cell lines (GM12878, H1-hESC, HeLa-S3, HepG2, HSMM, HUVEC, K562, NHEK, and NHLF) is shown in addition to ENCODE p300 binding peaks in K562, A549 (EtOH .02), HeLa-S3, and SKN_SH_RA cell lines. An ENCODE HEK293T DNase hypersensitive site (HEK293T DHS) is shown in the HS2 Enhancer inset. FIGS. 9B-9E shows relative transcriptional induction of *HBE*, *HBG*, *HBD*, and *HBD* transcripts from single and pooled *Sp.* dCas9 gRNAs (A–D) or single and pooled *Nm.* dCas9 gRNAs (A–E) in response to co-transfection with *Sp.* dCas9^{p300 Core} or *Nm.* dCas9^{p300 Core} respectively. gRNAs are tiled for each dCas9 ortholog corresponding to their location in GRCh37/hg19. Gray dashed line indicates background expression level in transiently co-transfected HEK293T cells. Note shared logarithmic scale among FIGS. 9B-9E. Numbers above bars in FIGS. 9B-9E indicate mean expression (n = at least 3 independent experiments, error bars: s.e.m.).

[0020] FIG. 10 shows that dCas9^{VP64} and dCas9^{p300 Core} induce H3K27ac enrichment at *ILIRN* gRNA-targeted chromatin.

[0021] FIGS. 11A-11C show a direct comparison of VP64 and p300 Core effector domains between TALE and dCas9 programmable DNA binding proteins. FIG. 11A shows the GRCh37/hg19 region encompassing the *ILIRN* transcription start site is shown schematically along with *ILIRN* TALE binding sites and dCas9 *ILIRN* gRNA target sites. FIG. 11B shows direct comparison of *ILIRN* activation in HEK293T cells when transfected with individual or pooled (A–D) *ILIRN* TALE^{VP64} fusion proteins or when co-transfected with dCas9^{VP64} and individual or pooled (A–D) *ILIRN*-targeting gRNAs. FIG. 11C shows direct comparison of *ILIRN* activation in HEK293T cells when transfected with individual or pooled (A–D) *ILIRN* TALE^{p300 Core} fusion proteins or when co-transfected with dCas9^{p300 Core} and individual or pooled (A–D) *ILIRN*-targeting gRNAs. Note shared logarithmic scale between FIG. 11B and FIG. 11C. Numbers above bars in FIGS. 11B and 11C indicate mean values. Tukey test, **P*-value <0.05, n = at least 3 independent experiments, error bars: s.e.m.

[0022] FIGS. 12A-12B show TALE and ZF fusion protein expression. FIG. 12A shows Western blotting was carried out on cells transiently transfected with individual or pooled *ILIRN* TALE proteins. Nitrocellulose membranes were cut and probed with α -HA primary antibody

(1:1000 dilution in TBST + 5% Milk, top, Covance cat.# MMS-101P) or α -GAPDH (bottom, Cell Signaling Technology cat.# 14C10) then α -Mouse HRP (Santa Cruz, sc-2005) or α -Rabbit HRP (Sigma-Aldrich cat.# A6154) secondary antibody, respectively. FIG. 12B shows Western blotting was carried out on cells transiently transfected with *ICAM1* ZF-effector proteins and nitrocellulose membranes were cut and probed with α -FLAG primary antibody (top, Sigma-Aldrich cat.# F7425) or α -GAPDH (bottom, Cell Signaling Technology cat.# 14C10) then α -Rabbit HRP secondary antibody (Sigma-Aldrich cat.# A6154). Red asterisk indicates non-specific band.

[0023] FIGS. 13A-13B show that dCas9^{p300 Core} and dCas9^{VP64} do not display synergy in transactivation. FIG. 13A shows dCas9^{p300 Core} was co-transfected at a 1:1 mass ratio to PL-SIN-EF1 α -EGFP³ (GFP), dCas9, or dCas9^{VP64} with four *ILIRN* promoter gRNAs as indicated (n = 2 independent experiments, error bars: s.e.m.). FIG. 13B shows dCas9^{p300 Core} was co-transfected at a 1:1 mass ratio to GFP, dCas9, or dCas9^{VP64} with four *MYOD* promoter gRNAs as indicated (n = 2 independent experiments, error bars: s.e.m.). No significant differences were observed using Tukey's test (n.s.).

[0024] FIGS. 14A-14D show the underlying chromatin context of dCas9^{p300 Core} target loci. FIGS. 14A-14D show indicated loci along with associated *Streptococcus pyogenes* gRNAs used in this study at corresponding genomic locations in GRCh37/hg19. ENCODE HEK293T DNase hypersensitivity enrichment is shown (note changes in scale) along with regions of significant DNase hypersensitivity in HEK293T cells ("DHS"). In addition ENCODE master DNase clusters across 125 cell types are shown. Layered ENCODE H3K27ac and H3K4me3 enrichment across seven cell lines (GM12878, H1-hESC, HSMM, HUVEC, K562, NHEK, and NHLF) is also displayed and scaled to a vertical viewing range of 50 and 150 respectively. Endogenous p300 binding profiles are also indicated for each locus and respective cell line.

[0025] FIG. 14E shows an overview of the information provided in FIGS. 14A-14D.

[0026] FIGS. 15A-15J show the amino acid sequences of dCas9 constructs.

[0027] FIG. 16 shows the amino acid sequences of *ICAM1* Zinc Finger¹⁰ effectors.

[0028] FIG. 17 shows gRNA design and screening.

[0029] FIG. 18 shows gRNA combination activation.

[0030] FIG. 19 shows Pax7 guide screening in 293Ts.

[0031] FIG. 20 shows that gRNA19 localizes to a DHS.

[0032] FIG. 21 shows the relative quantity of FGF1A mRNA in 293Ts with or without dCas9^{p300 Core}.

[0033] FIG. 22 shows expression levels of FGF1B and FGF1C in 293Ts with dCas9^{p300 Core}, dCas9^{VP64}, or dCas9 alone.

[0034] FIG. 23 shows expression levels of FGF1A, FGF1B, and FGF1C in 293Ts with dCas9^{p300 Core}, dCas9^{VP64}, or dCas9 alone.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0035] Disclosed herein are CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation systems and methods of using said systems. The systems provide an easily programmable approach to facilitate robust control of the epigenome and downstream gene expression. The CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system includes a CRISPR/Cas9-based acetyltransferase, which is a fusion protein of a Cas9 protein and a protein having histone acetyltransferase activity, such as the catalytic histone acetyltransferase (HAT) core domain of the human E1A-associated protein p300. The Cas9 protein may not have nuclease activity. An example of a Cas9 protein where the nuclease activity has been abolished is dCas9. Recruitment of the acetyltransferase function by dCas9 and a gRNA to the genomic target site allow direct modulation of epigenetic structure, and thus provide an effective means of gene activation.

[0036] The disclosed CRISPR/Cas9-based acetyltransferase catalyzes acetylation of histone H3 lysine 27 at its target sites, leading to robust transcriptional activation of target genes from promoters and both proximal and distal enhancers. As disclosed herein, gene activation by these targeted acetyltransferases is highly specific across the genome. The CRISPR/Cas9-based acetyltransferase, which can be targeted to any site in the genome, is uniquely capable of activating distal regulatory elements. In contrast to conventional dCas9-based activators, the CRISPR/Cas9-based acetyltransferase effectively activates genes from enhancer regions and with individual or single guide RNAs.

1. Definitions

[0037] The terms “comprise(s),” “include(s),” “having,” “has,” “can,” “contain(s),” and variants thereof, as used herein, are intended to be open-ended transitional phrases, terms, or words that do not preclude the possibility of additional acts or structures. The singular forms “a,” “and” and “the” include plural references unless the context clearly dictates otherwise. The

present disclosure also contemplates other embodiments “comprising,” “consisting of” and “consisting essentially of,” the embodiments or elements presented herein, whether explicitly set forth or not.

[0038] For the recitation of numeric ranges herein, each intervening number there between with the same degree of precision is explicitly contemplated. For example, for the range of 6-9, the numbers 7 and 8 are contemplated in addition to 6 and 9, and for the range 6.0-7.0, the number 6.0, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6, 6.7, 6.8, 6.9, and 7.0 are explicitly contemplated.

[0039] Unless otherwise defined, all technical and scientific terms used herein have the same meaning as commonly understood by one of ordinary skill in the art. In case of conflict, the present document, including definitions, will control. Preferred methods and materials are described below, although methods and materials similar or equivalent to those described herein can be used in practice or testing of the present invention. All publications, patent applications, patents and other references mentioned herein are incorporated by reference in their entirety. The materials, methods, and examples disclosed herein are illustrative only and not intended to be limiting.

[0040] “Adeno-associated virus” or “AAV” as used interchangeably herein refers to a small virus belonging to the genus Dependovirus of the Parvoviridae family that infects humans and some other primate species. AAV is not currently known to cause disease and consequently the virus causes a very mild immune response.

[0041] “Chromatin” as used herein refers to an organized complex of chromosomal DNA associated with histones.

[0042] “Cis-regulatory elements” or “CREs” as used interchangeably herein refers to regions of non-coding DNA which regulate the transcription of nearby genes. CREs are found in the vicinity of the gene, or genes, they regulate. CREs typically regulate gene transcription by functioning as binding sites for transcription factors. Examples of CREs include promoters and enhancers.

[0043] “Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats” and “CRISPRs”, as used interchangeably herein refers to loci containing multiple short direct repeats that are found in the genomes of approximately 40% of sequenced bacteria and 90% of sequenced archaea.

[0044] “Coding sequence” or “encoding nucleic acid” as used herein means the nucleic acids (RNA or DNA molecule) that comprise a nucleotide sequence which encodes a protein. The

coding sequence can further include initiation and termination signals operably linked to regulatory elements including a promoter and polyadenylation signal capable of directing expression in the cells of an individual or mammal to which the nucleic acid is administered. The coding sequence may be codon optimize.

[0045] “Complement” or “complementary” as used herein means a nucleic acid can mean Watson-Crick (*e.g.*, A-T/U and C-G) or Hoogsteen base pairing between nucleotides or nucleotide analogs of nucleic acid molecules. “Complementarity” refers to a property shared between two nucleic acid sequences, such that when they are aligned antiparallel to each other, the nucleotide bases at each position will be complementary.

[0046] “Endogenous gene” as used herein refers to a gene that originates from within an organism, tissue, or cell. An endogenous gene is native to a cell, which is in its normal genomic and chromatin context, and which is not heterologous to the cell. Such cellular genes include, *e.g.*, animal genes, plant genes, bacterial genes, protozoal genes, fungal genes, mitochondrial genes, and chloroplastic genes.

[0047] “Enhancer” as used herein refers to non-coding DNA sequences containing multiple activator and repressor binding sites. Enhancers range from 200 bp to 1 kb in length and may be either proximal, 5' upstream to the promoter or within the first intron of the regulated gene, or distal, in introns of neighboring genes or intergenic regions far away from the locus. Through DNA looping, active enhancers contact the promoter dependently of the core DNA binding motif promoter specificity. 4 to 5 enhancers may interact with a promoter. Similarly, enhancers may regulate more than one gene without linkage restriction and may “skip” neighboring genes to regulate more distant ones. Transcriptional regulation may involve elements located in a chromosome different to one where the promoter resides. Proximal enhancers or promoters of neighboring genes may serve as platforms to recruit more distal elements.

[0048] “Fusion protein” as used herein refers to a chimeric protein created through the joining of two or more genes that originally coded for separate proteins. The translation of the fusion gene results in a single polypeptide with functional properties derived from each of the original proteins.

[0049] “Genetic construct” as used herein refers to the DNA or RNA molecules that comprise a nucleotide sequence that encodes a protein. The coding sequence includes initiation and termination signals operably linked to regulatory elements including a promoter and

polyadenylation signal capable of directing expression in the cells of the individual to whom the nucleic acid molecule is administered. As used herein, the term "expressible form" refers to gene constructs that contain the necessary regulatory elements operable linked to a coding sequence that encodes a protein such that when present in the cell of the individual, the coding sequence will be expressed.

[0050] "Histone acetyltransferases" or "HATs" are used interchangeably herein refers to enzymes that acetylate conserved lysine amino acids on histone proteins by transferring an acetyl group from acetyl CoA to form ϵ -N-acetyllysine. DNA is wrapped around histones, and, by transferring an acetyl group to the histones, genes can be turned on and off. In general, histone acetylation increases gene expression as it is linked to transcriptional activation and associated with euchromatin. Histone acetyltransferases can also acetylate non-histone proteins, such as nuclear receptors and other transcription factors to facilitate gene expression.

[0051] "Identical" or "identity" as used herein in the context of two or more nucleic acids or polypeptide sequences means that the sequences have a specified percentage of residues that are the same over a specified region. The percentage may be calculated by optimally aligning the two sequences, comparing the two sequences over the specified region, determining the number of positions at which the identical residue occurs in both sequences to yield the number of matched positions, dividing the number of matched positions by the total number of positions in the specified region, and multiplying the result by 100 to yield the percentage of sequence identity. In cases where the two sequences are of different lengths or the alignment produces one or more staggered ends and the specified region of comparison includes only a single sequence, the residues of single sequence are included in the denominator but not the numerator of the calculation. When comparing DNA and RNA, thymine (T) and uracil (U) may be considered equivalent. Identity may be performed manually or by using a computer sequence algorithm such as BLAST or BLAST 2.0.

[0052] "Nucleic acid" or "oligonucleotide" or "polynucleotide" as used herein means at least two nucleotides covalently linked together. The depiction of a single strand also defines the sequence of the complementary strand. Thus, a nucleic acid also encompasses the complementary strand of a depicted single strand. Many variants of a nucleic acid may be used for the same purpose as a given nucleic acid. Thus, a nucleic acid also encompasses substantially identical nucleic acids and complements thereof. A single strand provides a probe

that may hybridize to a target sequence under stringent hybridization conditions. Thus, a nucleic acid also encompasses a probe that hybridizes under stringent hybridization conditions.

[0053] Nucleic acids may be single stranded or double stranded, or may contain portions of both double stranded and single stranded sequence. The nucleic acid may be DNA, both genomic and cDNA, RNA, or a hybrid, where the nucleic acid may contain combinations of deoxyribo- and ribo-nucleotides, and combinations of bases including uracil, adenine, thymine, cytosine, guanine, inosine, xanthine hypoxanthine, isocytosine and isoguanine. Nucleic acids may be obtained by chemical synthesis methods or by recombinant methods.

[0054] “Operably linked” as used herein means that expression of a gene is under the control of a promoter with which it is spatially connected. A promoter may be positioned 5' (upstream) or 3' (downstream) of a gene under its control. The distance between the promoter and a gene may be approximately the same as the distance between that promoter and the gene it controls in the gene from which the promoter is derived. As is known in the art, variation in this distance may be accommodated without loss of promoter function.

[0055] “p300 protein,” “EP300,” or “E1A binding protein p300” as used interchangeably herein refers to the adenovirus E1A-associated cellular p300 transcriptional co-activator protein encoded by the *EP300* gene. p300 is a highly conserved acetyltransferase involved in a wide range of cellular processes. p300 functions as a histone acetyltransferase that regulates transcription via chromatin remodeling and is involved with the processes of cell proliferation and differentiation.

[0056] “Promoter” as used herein means a synthetic or naturally-derived molecule which is capable of conferring, activating or enhancing expression of a nucleic acid in a cell. A promoter may comprise one or more specific transcriptional regulatory sequences to further enhance expression and/or to alter the spatial expression and/or temporal expression of same. A promoter may also comprise distal enhancer or repressor elements, which may be located as much as several thousand base pairs from the start site of transcription. A promoter may be derived from sources including viral, bacterial, fungal, plants, insects, and animals. A promoter may regulate the expression of a gene component constitutively, or differentially with respect to cell, the tissue or organ in which expression occurs or, with respect to the developmental stage at which expression occurs, or in response to external stimuli such as physiological stresses, pathogens, metal ions, or inducing agents. Representative examples of promoters include the bacteriophage

T7 promoter, bacteriophage T3 promoter, SP6 promoter, lac operator-promoter, tac promoter, SV40 late promoter, SV40 early promoter, RSV-LTR promoter, CMV IE promoter, SV40 early promoter or SV40 late promoter and the CMV IE promoter.

[0057] “Target enhancer” as used herein refers to enhancer that is targeted by a gRNA and CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system. The target enhancer may be within the target region.

[0058] “Target gene” as used herein refers to any nucleotide sequence encoding a known or putative gene product. The target gene includes the regulatory regions, such as the promoter and enhancer regions, the transcribed regions, which include the coding regions, and other function sequence regions.

[0059] “Target region” as used herein refers to a cis-regulatory region or a trans-regulatory region of a target gene to which the guide RNA is designed to recruit the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system to modulate the epigenetic structure and allow the activation of gene expression of the target gene.

[0060] “Target regulatory element” as used herein refers to a regulatory element that is targeted by a gRNA and CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system. The target regulatory element may be within the target region.

[0061] “Transcribed region” as used herein refers to the region of DNA that is transcribed into single-stranded RNA molecule, known as messenger RNA, resulting in the transfer of genetic information from the DNA molecule to the messenger RNA. During transcription, RNA polymerase reads the template strand in the 3' to 5' direction and synthesizes the RNA from 5' to 3'. The mRNA sequence is complementary to the DNA strand.

[0062] “Transcriptional Start Site” or “TSS” as used interchangeably herein refers to the first nucleotide of a transcribed DNA sequence where RNA polymerase begins synthesizing the RNA transcript.

[0063] “Transgene” as used herein refers to a gene or genetic material containing a gene sequence that has been isolated from one organism and is introduced into a different organism. This non-native segment of DNA may retain the ability to produce RNA or protein in the transgenic organism, or it may alter the normal function of the transgenic organism's genetic code. The introduction of a transgene has the potential to change the phenotype of an organism.

[0064] “Trans-regulatory elements” as used herein refers to regions of non-coding DNA which regulate the transcription of genes distant from the gene from which they were transcribed. Trans-regulatory elements may be on the same or different chromosome from the target gene.

[0065] “Variant” used herein with respect to a nucleic acid means (i) a portion or fragment of a referenced nucleotide sequence; (ii) the complement of a referenced nucleotide sequence or portion thereof; (iii) a nucleic acid that is substantially identical to a referenced nucleic acid or the complement thereof; or (iv) a nucleic acid that hybridizes under stringent conditions to the referenced nucleic acid, complement thereof, or a sequences substantially identical thereto.

[0066] “Variant” with respect to a peptide or polypeptide that differs in amino acid sequence by the insertion, deletion, or conservative substitution of amino acids, but retain at least one biological activity. Variant may also mean a protein with an amino acid sequence that is substantially identical to a referenced protein with an amino acid sequence that retains at least one biological activity. A conservative substitution of an amino acid, *i.e.*, replacing an amino acid with a different amino acid of similar properties (*e.g.*, hydrophilicity, degree and distribution of charged regions) is recognized in the art as typically involving a minor change. These minor changes may be identified, in part, by considering the hydrophobic index of amino acids, as understood in the art. Kyte *et al.*, *J. Mol. Biol.* 157:105-132 (1982). The hydrophobic index of an amino acid is based on a consideration of its hydrophobicity and charge. It is known in the art that amino acids of similar hydrophobic indexes may be substituted and still retain protein function. In one aspect, amino acids having hydrophobic indexes of ± 2 are substituted. The hydrophilicity of amino acids may also be used to reveal substitutions that would result in proteins retaining biological function. A consideration of the hydrophilicity of amino acids in the context of a peptide permits calculation of the greatest local average hydrophilicity of that peptide. Substitutions may be performed with amino acids having hydrophilicity values within ± 2 of each other. Both the hydrophobicity index and the hydrophilicity value of amino acids are influenced by the particular side chain of that amino acid. Consistent with that observation, amino acid substitutions that are compatible with biological function are understood to depend on the relative similarity of the amino acids, and particularly the side chains of those amino acids, as revealed by the hydrophobicity, hydrophilicity, charge, size, and other properties.

[0067] "Vector" as used herein means a nucleic acid sequence containing an origin of replication. A vector may be a viral vector, bacteriophage, bacterial artificial chromosome or yeast artificial chromosome. A vector may be a DNA or RNA vector. A vector may be a self-replicating extrachromosomal vector, and preferably, is a DNA plasmid. For example, the vector may encode a CRISPR/Cas9-based acetyltransferase having an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 140, 141, or 149 and/or at least one gRNA nucleotide sequence of any one of SEQ ID NOs: 23-73, 188-223, or 224-254.

2. CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system

[0068] Provided herein are CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation systems for use in activating gene expression of a target gene. The CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system includes a fusion protein of a Cas9 protein that does not have nuclease activity, such as dCas9, and a histone acetyltransferase or histone acetyltransferase effector domain. Histone acetylation, carried out by histone acetyltransferases (HATs), plays a fundamental role in regulating chromatin dynamics and transcriptional regulation. The histone acetyltransferase protein releases DNA from its heterochromatin state and allows for continued and robust gene expression by the endogenous cellular machinery. The recruitment of an acetyltransferase by dCas9 to a genomic target site may directly modulate epigenetic structure.

[0069] The CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system may catalyze acetylation of histone H3 lysine 27 at its target sites, leading to robust transcriptional activation of target genes from promoters and proximal and distal enhancers. The CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system is highly specific and may be guided to the target gene using as few as one guide RNA. The CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system may activate the expression of one gene or a family of genes by targeting enhancers at distant locations in the genome.

a) CRISPR system

[0070] The CRISPR system is a microbial nuclease system involved in defense against invading phages and plasmids that provides a form of acquired immunity. The CRISPR loci in microbial hosts contain a combination of CRISPR-associated (Cas) genes as well as non-coding RNA elements capable of programming the specificity of the CRISPR-mediated nucleic acid cleavage. Short segments of foreign DNA, called spacers, are incorporated into the genome between CRISPR repeats, and serve as a 'memory' of past exposures. Cas9 forms a complex with the 3' end of the single guide RNA ("sgRNA"), and the protein-RNA pair recognizes its

genomic target by complementary base pairing between the 5' end of the sgRNA sequence and a predefined 20 bp DNA sequence, known as the protospacer. This complex is directed to homologous loci of pathogen DNA via regions encoded within the CRISPR RNA ("crRNA"), i.e., the protospacers, and protospacer-adjacent motifs (PAMs) within the pathogen genome. The non-coding CRISPR array is transcribed and cleaved within direct repeats into short crRNAs containing individual spacer sequences, which direct Cas nucleases to the target site (protospacer). By simply exchanging the 20 bp recognition sequence of the expressed chimeric sgRNA, the Cas9 nuclease can be directed to new genomic targets. CRISPR spacers are used to recognize and silence exogenous genetic elements in a manner analogous to RNAi in eukaryotic organisms.

[0071] Three classes of CRISPR systems (Types I, II and III effector systems) are known. The Type II effector system carries out targeted DNA double-strand break in four sequential steps, using a single effector enzyme, Cas9, to cleave dsDNA. Compared to the Type I and Type III effector systems, which require multiple distinct effectors acting as a complex, the Type II effector system may function in alternative contexts such as eukaryotic cells. The Type II effector system consists of a long pre-crRNA, which is transcribed from the spacer-containing CRISPR locus, the Cas9 protein, and a tracrRNA, which is involved in pre-crRNA processing. The tracrRNAs hybridize to the repeat regions separating the spacers of the pre-crRNA, thus initiating dsRNA cleavage by endogenous RNase III. This cleavage is followed by a second cleavage event within each spacer by Cas9, producing mature crRNAs that remain associated with the tracrRNA and Cas9, forming a Cas9:crRNA-tracrRNA complex.

[0072] An engineered form of the Type II effector system of *Streptococcus pyogenes* was shown to function in human cells for genome engineering. In this system, the Cas9 protein was directed to genomic target sites by a synthetically reconstituted "guide RNA" ("gRNA", also used interchangeably herein as a chimeric sgRNA, which is a crRNA-tracrRNA fusion that obviates the need for RNase III and crRNA processing in general.

[0073] The Cas9:crRNA-tracrRNA complex unwinds the DNA duplex and searches for sequences matching the crRNA to cleave. Target recognition occurs upon detection of complementarity between a "protospacer" sequence in the target DNA and the remaining spacer sequence in the crRNA. Cas9 mediates cleavage of target DNA if a correct protospacer-adjacent motif (PAM) is also present at the 3' end of the protospacer. For protospacer targeting, the

sequence must be immediately followed by the protospacer-adjacent motif (PAM), a short sequence recognized by the Cas9 nuclease that is required for DNA cleavage. Different Type II systems have differing PAM requirements. The *S. pyogenes* CRISPR system may have the PAM sequence for this Cas9 (SpCas9) as 5'-NRG-3', where R is either A or G, and characterized the specificity of this system in human cells. A unique capability of the CRISPR/Cas9 system is the straightforward ability to simultaneously target multiple distinct genomic loci by co-expressing a single Cas9 protein with two or more sgRNAs. For example, the *Streptococcus pyogenes* Type II system naturally prefers to use an "NGG" sequence, where "N" can be any nucleotide, but also accepts other PAM sequences, such as "NAG" in engineered systems (Hsu et al., *Nature Biotechnology* (2013) doi:10.1038/nbt.2647). Similarly, the Cas9 derived from *Neisseria meningitidis* (NmCas9) normally has a native PAM of NNNNGATT, but has activity across a variety of PAMs, including a highly degenerate NNNNGNNN PAM (Esvelt et al. *Nature Methods* (2013) doi:10.1038/nmeth.2681).

b) Cas9

[0074] The CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system may include a Cas9 protein or a Cas9 fusion protein. Cas9 protein is an endonuclease that cleaves nucleic acid and is encoded by the CRISPR loci and is involved in the Type II CRISPR system. The Cas9 protein may be from any bacterial or archaea species, such as *Streptococcus pyogenes*, *Streptococcus thermophiles*, or *Neisseria meningitides*. The Cas9 protein may be mutated so that the nuclease activity is inactivated. In some embodiments, an inactivated Cas9 protein from *Streptococcus pyogenes* (iCas9, also referred to as "dCas9"; SEQ ID NO: 1) may be used. As used herein, "iCas9" and "dCas9" both refer to a Cas9 protein that has the amino acid substitutions D10A and H840A and has its nuclease activity inactivated. In some embodiments, an inactivated Cas9 protein from *Neisseria meningitides*, such as NmCas9 having an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 10, may be used.

c) Histone acetyltransferase (HAT) protein

[0075] The CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system may include a histone acetyltransferase protein, such as a p300 protein, CREB binding protein (CBP; an analog of p300), GCN5, or PCAF, or fragment thereof. The p300 protein regulates the activity of many genes in tissues throughout the body. The p300 protein plays a role in regulating cell growth and division, prompting cells to mature and assume specialized functions (differentiate) and

preventing the growth of cancerous tumors. The p300 protein may activate transcription by connecting transcription factors with a complex of proteins that carry out transcription in the cell's nucleus. The p300 protein also functions as a histone acetyltransferase that regulates transcription via chromatin remodeling.

[0076] The histone acetyltransferase protein may include a human p300 protein or a fragment thereof. The histone acetyltransferase protein may include a wild-type human p300 protein or a mutant human p300 protein, or fragments thereof. The histone acetyltransferase protein may include the core lysine-acetyltransferase domain of the human p300 protein, i.e., the p300 HAT Core (also known as "p300 Core"). In some embodiments, the histone acetyltransferase protein includes an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2 or 3.

i) dCas9^{p300 Core}

[0077] The CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system may include a histone acetylation effector domain. The histone acetylation effector domain may be the catalytic histone acetyltransferase (HAT) core domain of the human E1A-associated protein p300 (also referred to herein as "p300 Core"). In some embodiments, the p300 Core includes amino acids 1048-1664 of SEQ ID NO: 2 (i.e., SEQ ID NO: 3). In some embodiments, the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system includes a dCas9^{p300 Core} fusion protein of SEQ ID NO: 141 or an *Nm*-dCas9^{p300 Core} fusion protein of SEQ ID NO: 149. The p300 Core acetylates lysine 27 on histone H3 (H3K27ac) and may provide H3K27ac enrichment.

[0078] The dCas9^{p300 Core} fusion protein is a potent and easily programmable tool to synthetically manipulate acetylation at targeted endogenous loci, leading to regulation of proximal and distal enhancer-regulated genes. The fusion of the catalytic core domain of p300 to dCas9 may result in substantially higher transactivation of downstream genes than the direct fusion of full-length p300 protein despite robust protein expression. The dCas9^{p300 Core} fusion protein may also exhibit an increased transactivation capacity relative to dCas9^{VP64}, including in the context of the *Nm*-dCas9 scaffold, especially at distal enhancer regions, at which dCas9^{VP64} displayed little, if any, measurable downstream transcriptional activity. Additionally, the dCas9^{p300 Core} displays precise and robust genome-wide transcriptional specificity. dCas9^{p300 Core} may be capable of potent transcriptional activation and co-enrichment of acetylation at promoters targeted by the epigenetically modified enhancer.

[0079] The dCas9^{p300 Core} may activate gene expression through a single gRNA that target and bind a promoters and/or a characterized enhancer. This technology also affords the ability to synthetically transactivate distal genes from putative and known regulatory regions and simplifies transactivation via the application of a single programmable effector and single target site. These capabilities allow multiplexing to target several promoters and/or enhancers simultaneously. The mammalian origin of p300 may provide advantages over virally-derived effector domains for *in vivo* applications by minimizing potential immunogenicity.

d) gRNA

[0080] The CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system may include at least one gRNA that targets a nucleic acid sequence. The gRNA provides the targeting of the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system. The gRNA is a fusion of two noncoding RNAs: a crRNA and a tracrRNA. The sgRNA may target any desired DNA sequence by exchanging the sequence encoding a 20 bp protospacer which confers targeting specificity through complementary base pairing with the desired DNA target. gRNA mimics the naturally occurring crRNA:tracrRNA duplex involved in the Type II Effector system. This duplex, which may include, for example, a 42-nucleotide crRNA and a 75-nucleotide tracrRNA, acts as a guide for the Cas9.

[0081] The gRNA may target and bind a target region of a target gene. The target region may be a cis-regulatory region or trans-regulatory region of a target gene. In some embodiments, the target region is a distal or proximal cis-regulatory region of the target gene. The gRNA may target and bind a cis-regulatory region or trans-regulatory region of a target gene. In some embodiments, the gRNA may target and bind an enhancer region, a promoter region, or a transcribed region of a target gene. For example, the gRNA may target and bind the target region is at least one of HS2 enhancer of the human β -globin locus, distal regulatory region (DRR) of the *MYOD* gene, core enhancer (CE) of the *MYOD* gene, proximal (PE) enhancer region of the *OCT4* gene, or distal (DE) enhancer region of the *OCT4* gene. In some embodiments, the target region may be a viral promoter, such as an HIV promoter.

[0082] The target region may include a target enhancer or a target regulatory element. In some embodiments, the target enhancer or target regulatory element controls the gene expression of several target genes. In some embodiments, the target enhancer or target regulatory element controls a cell phenotype that involves the gene expression of one or more target genes. In some embodiments, the identity of one or more of the target genes is known. In some embodiments,

the identity of one or more of the target genes is unknown. The CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system allows the determination of the identity of these unknown genes that are involved in a cell phenotype. Examples of cell phenotypes include, but not limited to, T-cell phenotype, cell differentiation, such as hematopoietic cell differentiation, oncogenesis, immunomodulation, cell response to stimuli, cell death, cell growth, drug resistance, or drug sensitivity.

[0083] In some embodiments, at least one gRNA may target and bind a target enhancer or target regulatory element, whereby the expression of one or more genes is activated. For example, between 1 gene and 20 genes, between 1 gene and 15 genes, between 1 gene and 10 genes, between 1 gene and 5 genes, between 2 genes and 20 genes, between 2 genes and 15 genes, between 2 genes and 10 genes, between 2 genes and 5 genes, between 5 genes and 20 genes, between 5 genes and 15 genes, or between 5 genes and 10 genes are activated by at least one gRNA. In some embodiments, at least 1 gene, at least 2 genes, at least 3 genes, at least 4 genes, at least 5 gene, at least 6 genes, at least 7 genes, at least 8 genes, at least 9 gene, at least 10 genes, at least 11 genes, at least 12 genes, at least 13 gene, at least 14 genes, at least 15 genes, or at least 20 genes are activated by at least one gRNA.

[0084] The CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system may activate genes at both proximal and distal locations relative the transcriptional start site (TSS). The CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system may target a region that is at least about 1 base pair to about 100,000 base pairs, at least about 100 base pairs to about 100,000 base pairs, at least about 250 base pairs to about 100,000 base pairs, at least about 500 base pairs to about 100,000 base pairs, at least about 1,000 base pairs to about 100,000 base pairs, at least about 2,000 base pairs to about 100,000 base pairs, at least about 5,000 base pairs to about 100,000 base pairs, at least about 10,000 base pairs to about 100,000 base pairs, at least about 20,000 base pairs to about 100,000 base pairs, at least about 50,000 base pairs to about 100,000 base pairs, at least about 75,000 base pairs to about 100,000 base pairs, at least about 1 base pair to about 75,000 base pairs, at least about 100 base pairs to about 75,000 base pairs, at least about 250 base pairs to about 75,000 base pairs, at least about 500 base pairs to about 75,000 base pairs, at least about 1,000 base pairs to about 75,000 base pairs, at least about 2,000 base pairs to about 75,000 base pairs, at least about 5,000 base pairs to about 75,000 base pairs, at least about 10,000 base pairs to about 75,000 base pairs, at least about 20,000 base pairs to about 75,000 base pairs, at least about 50,000 base pairs to

about 75,000 base pairs, at least about 1 base pair to about 50,000 base pairs, at least about 100 base pairs to about 50,000 base pairs, at least about 250 base pairs to about 50,000 base pairs, at least about 500 base pairs to about 50,000 base pairs, at least about 1,000 base pairs to about 50,000 base pairs, at least about 2,000 base pairs to about 50,000 base pairs, at least about 5,000 base pairs to about 50,000 base pairs, at least about 10,000 base pairs to about 50,000 base pairs, at least about 20,000 base pairs to about 50,000 base pairs, at least about 1 base pair to about 25,000 base pairs, at least about 100 base pairs to about 25,000 base pairs, at least about 250 base pairs to about 25,000 base pairs, at least about 500 base pairs to about 25,000 base pairs, at least about 1,000 base pairs to about 25,000 base pairs, at least about 2,000 base pairs to about 25,000 base pairs, at least about 5,000 base pairs to about 25,000 base pairs, at least about 10,000 base pairs to about 25,000 base pairs, at least about 20,000 base pairs to about 25,000 base pairs, at least about 1 base pair to about 10,000 base pairs, at least about 100 base pairs to about 10,000 base pairs, at least about 250 base pairs to about 10,000 base pairs, at least about 500 base pairs to about 10,000 base pairs, at least about 1,000 base pairs to about 10,000 base pairs, at least about 2,000 base pairs to about 10,000 base pairs, at least about 5,000 base pairs to about 10,000 base pairs, at least about 1 base pair to about 5,000 base pairs, at least about 100 base pairs to about 5,000 base pairs, at least about 250 base pairs to about 5,000 base pairs, at least about 500 base pairs to about 5,000 base pairs, at least about 1,000 base pairs to about 5,000 base pairs, or at least about 2,000 base pairs to about 5,000 base pairs upstream from the TSS. The CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system may target a region that is at least about 1 base pair, at least about 100 base pairs, at least about 500 base pairs, at least about 1,000 base pairs, at least about 1,250 base pairs, at least about 2,000 base pairs, at least about 2,250 base pairs, at least about 2,500 base pairs, at least about 5,000 base pairs, at least about 10,000 base pairs, at least about 11,000 base pairs, at least about 20,000 base pairs, at least about 30,000 base pairs, at least about 46,000 base pairs, at least about 50,000 base pairs, at least about 54,000 base pairs, at least about 75,000 base pairs, or at least about 100,000 base pairs upstream from the TSS.

[0085] The CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system may target a region that is at least about 1 base pair to at least about 500 base pairs, at least about 1 base pair to at least about 250 base pairs, at least about 1 base pair to at least about 200 base pairs, at least about 1 base pair to at least about 100 base pairs, at least about 50 base pairs to at least about 500 base pairs, at least about 50 base pairs to at least about 250 base pairs at least about 50 base pairs to at least about

200 base pairs, at least about 50 base pairs to at least about 100 base pairs, at least about 100 base pairs to at least about 500 base pairs, at least about 100 base pairs to at least about 250 base pairs, or at least about 100 base pairs to at least about 200 base pairs downstream from the TSS. The CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system may target a region that is at least about 1 base pair, at least about 2 base pairs, at least about 3 base pairs, at least about 4 base pairs, at least about 5 base pairs, at least about 10 base pairs, at least about 15 base pairs, at least about 20 base pairs, at least about 25 base pairs, at least about 30 base pairs, at least about 40 base pairs, at least about 50 base pairs, at least about 60 base pairs, at least about 70 base pairs, at least about 80 base pairs, at least about 90 base pairs, at least about 100 base pairs, at least about 110 base pairs, at least about 120, at least about 130, at least about 140 base pairs, at least about 150 base pairs, at least about 160 base pairs, at least about 170 base pairs, at least about 180 base pairs, at least about 190 base pairs, at least about 200 base pairs, at least about 210 base pairs, at least about 220, at least about 230, at least about 240 base pairs, or at least about 250 base pairs downstream from the TSS.

[0086] In some embodiments, the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system may target and bind a target region that is on the same chromosome as the target gene but more than 100,000 base pairs upstream or more than 250 base pairs downstream from the TSS. In some embodiments, the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system may target and bind a target region that is on a different chromosome from the target gene.

[0087] The CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system may use gRNA of varying sequences and lengths. The gRNA may comprise a complementary polynucleotide sequence of the target DNA sequence followed by NGG. The gRNA may comprise a “G” at the 5’ end of the complementary polynucleotide sequence. The gRNA may comprise at least a 10 base pair, at least a 11 base pair, at least a 12 base pair, at least a 13 base pair, at least a 14 base pair, at least a 15 base pair, at least a 16 base pair, at least a 17 base pair, at least a 18 base pair, at least a 19 base pair, at least a 20 base pair, at least a 21 base pair, at least a 22 base pair, at least a 23 base pair, at least a 24 base pair, at least a 25 base pair, at least a 30 base pair, or at least a 35 base pair complementary polynucleotide sequence of the target DNA sequence followed by NGG. The gRNA may target at least one of the promoter region, the enhancer region or the transcribed region of the target gene. The gRNA may include a nucleic acid sequence of at least one of SEQ ID NOs: 23-73, 188-223, or 224-254.

[0088] The CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system may include at least 1 gRNA, at least 2 different gRNAs, at least 3 different gRNAs at least 4 different gRNAs, at least 5 different gRNAs, at least 6 different gRNAs, at least 7 different gRNAs, at least 8 different gRNAs, at least 9 different gRNAs, or at least 10 different gRNAs. The CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system may include between at least 1 gRNA to at least 10 different gRNAs, at least 1 gRNA to at least 8 different gRNAs, at least 1 gRNA to at least 4 different gRNAs, at least 2 gRNA to at least 10 different gRNAs, at least 2 gRNA to at least 8 different gRNAs, at least 2 different gRNAs to at least 4 different gRNAs, at least 4 gRNA to at least 10 different gRNAs, or at least 4 different gRNAs to at least 8 different gRNAs.

3. Target Genes

[0089] The CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system may be designed to target and activate the expression of any target gene. The target gene may be an endogenous gene, a transgene, or a viral gene in a cell line. In some embodiments, the target region is located on a different chromosome as the target gene. In some embodiments, the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system may include more than 1 gRNA. In some embodiments, the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system may include more than 1 different gRNAs. In some embodiments, the different gRNAs bind to different target regions. For example, the different gRNAs may bind to target regions of different target genes and the expression of two or more target genes are activated.

[0090] In some embodiments, the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system may activate between about one target gene to about ten target genes, about one target genes to about five target genes, about one target genes to about four target genes, about one target genes to about three target genes, about one target genes to about two target genes, about two target gene to about ten target genes, about two target genes to about five target genes, about two target genes to about four target genes, about two target genes to about three target genes, about three target genes to about ten target genes, about three target genes to about five target genes, or about three target genes to about four target genes. In some embodiments, the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system may activate at least one target gene, at least two target genes, at least three target genes, at least four target genes, at least five target genes, or at least ten target genes. For example, the may target the hypersensitive site 2 (HS2) enhancer region of the human β -globin locus and activate downstream genes (HBE, HBG, HBD and HBB).

[0091] In some embodiments, the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system induces the gene expression of a target gene by at least about 1 fold, at least about 2 fold, at least about 3 fold, at least about 4 fold, at least about 5 fold, at least about 6 fold, at least about 7 fold, at least about 8 fold, at least about 9 fold, at least about 10 fold, at least 15 fold, at least 20 fold, at least 30 fold, at least 40 fold, at least 50 fold, at least 60 fold, at least 70 fold, at least 80 fold, at least 90 fold, at least 100 fold, at least about 110 fold, at least 120 fold, at least 130 fold, at least 140 fold, at least 150 fold, at least 160 fold, at least 170 fold, at least 180 fold, at least 190 fold, at least 200 fold, at least about 300 fold, at least 400 fold, at least 500 fold, at least 600 fold, at least 700 fold, at least 800 fold, at least 900 fold, or at least 1000 fold compared to a control level of gene expression. A control level of gene expression of the target gene may be the level of gene expression of the target gene in a cell that is not treated with any CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system

[0092] The target gene may be a mammalian gene. For example, the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system may target a mammalian gene, such as *IL1RN*, *MYOD1*, *OCT4*, *HBE*, *HBG*, *HBD*, *HBB*, *MYOCD* (Myocardin), *PAX7* (Paired box protein Pax-7), *FGF1* (fibroblast growth factor-1) genes, such as *FGF1A*, *FGF1B*, and *FGF1C*. Other target genes include, but not limited to, *Atf3*, *Axud1*, *Btg2*, *c-Fos*, *c-Jun*, *Cxcl1*, *Cxcl2*, *Edn1*, *Ereg*, *Fos*, *Gadd45b*, *Ier2*, *Ier3*, *Ifrd1*, *Il1b*, *Il6*, *Irf1*, *Junb*, *Lif*, *Nfkb1a*, *Nfkbiz*, *Ptgs2*, *Slc25a25*, *Sqstm1*, *Tieg*, *Tnf*, *Tnfaip3*, *Zfp36*, *Birc2*, *Ccl2*, *Ccl20*, *Ccl7*, *Cebpd*, *Ch25h*, *CSF1*, *Cx3cl1*, *Cxcl10*, *Cxcl5*, *Gch*, *Icam1*, *Ifi47*, *Ifngr2*, *Mmp10*, *Nfkbie*, *Npal1*, *p21*, *Relb*, *Ripk2*, *Rnd1*, *S1pr3*, *Stx11*, *Tgtp*, *Tlr2*, *Tmem140*, *Tnfaip2*, *Tnfrsf6*, *Vcam1*, 1110004C05Rik (GenBank accession number BC010291), *Abca1*, AI561871 (GenBank accession number BI143915), AI882074 (GenBank accession number BB730912), *Arts1*, AW049765 (GenBank accession number BC026642.1), *C3*, *Casp4*, *Ccl5*, *Ccl9*, *Cdsn*, *Enpp2*, *Gbp2*, *H2-D1*, *H2-K*, *H2-L*, *Ifit1*, *Ii*, *Il13ra1*, *Il1rl1*, *Lcn2*, *Lhfpl2*, LOC677168 (GenBank accession number AK019325), *Mmp13*, *Mmp3*, *Mt2*, *Naf1*, *Ppicap*, *Prnd*, *Psmb10*, *Saa3*, *Serpina3g*, *Serpinf1*, *Sod3*, *Stat1*, *Tapbp*, U90926 (GenBank accession number NM_020562), *Ubd*, *A2AR* (Adenosine A2A receptor), *B7-H3* (also called CD276), *B7-H4* (also called VTCN1), *BTLA* (B and T Lymphocyte Attenuator; also called CD272), *CTLA-4* (Cytotoxic T-Lymphocyte-Associated protein 4; also called CD152), *IDO* (Indoleamine 2,3-dioxygenase) *KIR* (Killer-cell Immunoglobulin-like Receptor), *LAG3* (Lymphocyte Activation

Gene-3), PD-1 (Programmed Death 1 (PD-1) receptor), TIM-3 (T-cell Immunoglobulin domain and Mucin domain 3), and VISTA (V-domain Ig suppressor of T cell activation).

4. Compositions for Gene Activation

[0093] The present invention is directed to a composition for activating gene expression of a target gene, target enhancer, or target regulatory element in a cell or subject. The composition may include the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system, as disclosed above. The composition may also include a viral delivery system. For example, the viral delivery system may include an adeno-associated virus vector or a modified lentiviral vector.

[0094] Methods of introducing a nucleic acid into a host cell are known in the art, and any known method can be used to introduce a nucleic acid (e.g., an expression construct) into a cell. Suitable methods include, include e.g., viral or bacteriophage infection, transfection, conjugation, protoplast fusion, lipofection, electroporation, calcium phosphate precipitation, polyethyleneimine (PEI)-mediated transfection, DEAE-dextran mediated transfection, liposome-mediated transfection, particle gun technology, calcium phosphate precipitation, direct micro injection, nanoparticle-mediated nucleic acid delivery, and the like. In some embodiments, the composition may be delivered by mRNA delivery and ribonucleoprotein (RNP) complex delivery.

a) Constructs and Plasmids

[0095] The compositions, as described above, may comprise genetic constructs that encodes the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system, as disclosed herein. The genetic construct, such as a plasmid or expression vector, may comprise a nucleic acid that encodes the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system, such as the CRISPR/Cas9-based acetyltransferase and/or at least one of the gRNAs. The compositions, as described above, may comprise genetic constructs that encodes the modified AAV vector and a nucleic acid sequence that encodes the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system, as disclosed herein. The genetic construct, such as a plasmid, may comprise a nucleic acid that encodes the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system. The compositions, as described above, may comprise genetic constructs that encodes a modified lentiviral vector. The genetic construct, such as a plasmid, may comprise a nucleic acid that encodes the CRISPR/Cas9-based acetyltransferase and at least one sgRNA. The genetic construct may be present in the cell as a functioning extrachromosomal molecule. The genetic

construct may be a linear minichromosome including centromere, telomeres or plasmids or cosmids.

[0096] The genetic construct may also be part of a genome of a recombinant viral vector, including recombinant lentivirus, recombinant adenovirus, and recombinant adenovirus associated virus. The genetic construct may be part of the genetic material in attenuated live microorganisms or recombinant microbial vectors which live in cells. The genetic constructs may comprise regulatory elements for gene expression of the coding sequences of the nucleic acid. The regulatory elements may be a promoter, an enhancer, an initiation codon, a stop codon, or a polyadenylation signal.

[0097] The nucleic acid sequences may make up a genetic construct that may be a vector. The vector may be capable of expressing the fusion protein, such as the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system, in the cell of a mammal. The vector may be recombinant. The vector may comprise heterologous nucleic acid encoding the fusion protein, such as the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system. The vector may be a plasmid. The vector may be useful for transfecting cells with nucleic acid encoding the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system, which the transformed host cell is cultured and maintained under conditions wherein expression of the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system takes place.

[0098] Coding sequences may be optimized for stability and high levels of expression. In some instances, codons are selected to reduce secondary structure formation of the RNA such as that formed due to intramolecular bonding.

[0099] The vector may comprise heterologous nucleic acid encoding the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system and may further comprise an initiation codon, which may be upstream of the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system coding sequence, and a stop codon, which may be downstream of the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system coding sequence. The initiation and termination codon may be in frame with the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system coding sequence. The vector may also comprise a promoter that is operably linked to the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system coding sequence. The CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system may be under the light-inducible or chemically inducible control to enable the dynamic control of gene activation in space and time. The promoter operably linked to the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system coding sequence may be a promoter from simian virus 40 (SV40), a mouse mammary tumor virus (MMTV) promoter, a human

immunodeficiency virus (HIV) promoter such as the bovine immunodeficiency virus (BIV) long terminal repeat (LTR) promoter, a Moloney virus promoter, an avian leukosis virus (ALV) promoter, a cytomegalovirus (CMV) promoter such as the CMV immediate early promoter, Epstein Barr virus (EBV) promoter, or a Rous sarcoma virus (RSV) promoter. The promoter may also be a promoter from a human gene such as human ubiquitin C (hUbC), human actin, human myosin, human hemoglobin, human muscle creatine, or human metallothionein. The promoter may also be a tissue specific promoter, such as a muscle or skin specific promoter, natural or synthetic. Examples of such promoters are described in US Patent Application Publication No. US20040175727, the contents of which are incorporated herein in its entirety.

[00100] The vector may also comprise a polyadenylation signal, which may be downstream of the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system. The polyadenylation signal may be a SV40 polyadenylation signal, LTR polyadenylation signal, bovine growth hormone (bGH) polyadenylation signal, human growth hormone (hGH) polyadenylation signal, or human β -globin polyadenylation signal. The SV40 polyadenylation signal may be a polyadenylation signal from a pCEP4 vector (Invitrogen, San Diego, CA).

[00101] The vector may also comprise an enhancer upstream of the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system, *i.e.*, the CRISPR/Cas9-based acetyltransferase coding sequence or sgRNAs. The enhancer may be necessary for DNA expression. The enhancer may be human actin, human myosin, human hemoglobin, human muscle creatine or a viral enhancer such as one from CMV, HA, RSV or EBV. Polynucleotide function enhancers are described in U.S. Patent Nos. 5,593,972, 5,962,428, and WO94/016737, the contents of each are fully incorporated by reference. The vector may also comprise a mammalian origin of replication in order to maintain the vector extrachromosomally and produce multiple copies of the vector in a cell. The vector may also comprise a regulatory sequence, which may be well suited for gene expression in a mammalian or human cell into which the vector is administered. The vector may also comprise a reporter gene, such as green fluorescent protein ("GFP") and/or a selectable marker, such as hygromycin ("Hygro").

[00102] The vector may be expression vectors or systems to produce protein by routine techniques and readily available starting materials including Sambrook *et al.*, Molecular Cloning and Laboratory Manual, Second Ed., Cold Spring Harbor (1989), which is incorporated fully by reference. In some embodiments the vector may comprise the nucleic acid sequence encoding

the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system, including the nucleic acid sequence encoding the CRISPR/Cas9-based acetyltransferase and the nucleic acid sequence encoding the at least one gRNA comprising the nucleic acid sequence of at least one of SEQ ID NOs: 23-73, 188-223, or 224-254.

b) Combinations

[00103] The CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system composition may be combined with orthogonal dCas9s, TALEs, and zinc finger proteins to facilitate studies of independent targeting of particular effector functions to distinct loci. In some embodiments, the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system composition may be multiplexed with various activators, repressors, and epigenetic modifiers to precisely control cell phenotype or decipher complex networks of gene regulation.

5. Methods of Use

[00104] Potential applications of the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system are diverse across many areas of science and biotechnology. The CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system may be used to activate gene expression of a target gene or target a target enhancer or target regulatory element. The CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system may be used to transdifferentiate a cell and/or activate genes related to cell and gene therapy, genetic reprogramming, and regenerative medicine. The CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system may be used to reprogram cell lineage specification. Activation of endogenous genes encoding the key regulators of cell fate, rather than forced overexpression of these factors, may potentially lead to more rapid, efficient, stable, or specific methods for genetic reprogramming and transdifferentiation. The CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system could provide a greater diversity of transcriptional activators to complement other tools for modulating mammalian gene expression. The CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system may be used to compensate for genetic defects, suppress angiogenesis, inactivate oncogenes, activate silenced tumor suppressors, regenerate tissue or reprogram genes.

6. Methods of Activating Gene Expression

[00105] The present disclosure provides a mechanism for activating the expression of target genes based on targeting a histone acetyltransferase to a target region via a CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system, as described above. The CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system may activate silenced genes. The CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system target regions

upstream of the TSS of the target gene and substantially induced gene expression of the target gene. The polynucleotide encoding the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system can also be transfected directly to cells.

[00106] The method may include administering to a cell or subject a CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system, compositions of CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system, or one or more polynucleotides or vectors encoding said CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system, as described above. The method may include administering a CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system, compositions of CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system, or one or more polynucleotides or vectors encoding said CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system, as described above, to a mammalian cell or subject.

7. Pharmaceutical Compositions

[00107] The CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system may be in a pharmaceutical composition. The pharmaceutical composition may comprise about 1 ng to about 10 mg of DNA encoding the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system. The pharmaceutical compositions according to the present invention are formulated according to the mode of administration to be used. In cases where pharmaceutical compositions are injectable pharmaceutical compositions, they are sterile, pyrogen free and particulate free. An isotonic formulation is preferably used. Generally, additives for isotonicity may include sodium chloride, dextrose, mannitol, sorbitol and lactose. In some cases, isotonic solutions such as phosphate buffered saline are preferred. Stabilizers include gelatin and albumin. In some embodiments, a vasoconstriction agent is added to the formulation.

[00108] The pharmaceutical composition containing the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system may further comprise a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient. The pharmaceutically acceptable excipient may be functional molecules as vehicles, adjuvants, carriers, or diluents. The pharmaceutically acceptable excipient may be a transfection facilitating agent, which may include surface active agents, such as immune-stimulating complexes (ISCOMS), Freund's incomplete adjuvant, LPS analog including monophosphoryl lipid A, muramyl peptides, quinone analogs, vesicles such as squalene and squalene, hyaluronic acid, lipids, liposomes, calcium ions, viral proteins, polyanions, polycations, or nanoparticles, or other known transfection facilitating agents.

[00109] The transfection facilitating agent is a polyanion, polycation, including poly-L-glutamate (LGS), or lipid. The transfection facilitating agent is poly-L-glutamate, and more preferably, the poly-L-glutamate is present in the pharmaceutical composition containing the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system at a concentration less than 6 mg/ml. The transfection facilitating agent may also include surface active agents such as immune-stimulating complexes (ISCOMS), Freund's incomplete adjuvant, LPS analog including monophosphoryl lipid A, muramyl peptides, quinone analogs and vesicles such as squalene and squalene, and hyaluronic acid may also be used administered in conjunction with the genetic construct. In some embodiments, the DNA vector encoding the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system may also include a transfection facilitating agent such as lipids, liposomes, including lecithin liposomes or other liposomes known in the art, as a DNA-liposome mixture (see for example W09324640), calcium ions, viral proteins, polyanions, polycations, or nanoparticles, or other known transfection facilitating agents. Preferably, the transfection facilitating agent is a polyanion, polycation, including poly-L-glutamate (LGS), or lipid.

8. Methods of Delivery

[00110] Provided herein is a method for delivering the pharmaceutical formulations of the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system for providing genetic constructs and/or proteins of the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system. The delivery of the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system may be the transfection or electroporation of the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system as one or more nucleic acid molecules that is expressed in the cell and delivered to the surface of the cell. The CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system protein may be delivered to the cell. The nucleic acid molecules may be electroporated using BioRad Gene Pulser Xcell or Amaxa Nucleofector IIb devices or other electroporation device. Several different buffers may be used, including BioRad electroporation solution, Sigma phosphate-buffered saline product #D8537 (PBS), Invitrogen OptiMEM I (OM), or Amaxa Nucleofector solution V (N.V.). Transfections may include a transfection reagent, such as Lipofectamine 2000.

[00111] The vector encoding a CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system protein may be delivered to the mammal by DNA injection (also referred to as DNA vaccination) with and without in vivo electroporation, liposome mediated, nanoparticle facilitated, and/or recombinant

vectors. The recombinant vector may be delivered by any viral mode. The viral mode may be recombinant lentivirus, recombinant adenovirus, and/or recombinant adeno-associated virus.

[00112] The nucleotide encoding a CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system protein may be introduced into a cell to induce gene expression of the target gene. For example, one or more nucleotide sequences encoding the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system directed towards a target gene may be introduced into a mammalian cell. Upon delivery of the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system to the cell, and thereupon the vector into the cells of the mammal, the transfected cells will express the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system. The CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system may be administered to a mammal to induce or modulate gene expression of the target gene in a mammal. The mammal may be human, non-human primate, cow, pig, sheep, goat, antelope, bison, water buffalo, bovids, deer, hedgehogs, elephants, llama, alpaca, mice, rats, or chicken, and preferably human, cow, pig, or chicken.

9. Routes of Administration

[00113] The CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system and compositions thereof may be administered to a subject by different routes including orally, parenterally, sublingually, transdermally, rectally, transmucosally, topically, via inhalation, via buccal administration, intrapleurally, intravenous, intraarterial, intraperitoneal, subcutaneous, intramuscular, intranasal, intrathecal, and intraarticular or combinations thereof. For veterinary use, the composition may be administered as a suitably acceptable formulation in accordance with normal veterinary practice. The veterinarian may readily determine the dosing regimen and route of administration that is most appropriate for a particular animal. The CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system and compositions thereof may be administered by traditional syringes, needleless injection devices, "microprojectile bombardment guns", or other physical methods such as electroporation ("EP"), "hydrodynamic method", or ultrasound. The composition may be delivered to the mammal by several technologies including DNA injection (also referred to as DNA vaccination) with and without *in vivo* electroporation, liposome mediated, nanoparticle facilitated, recombinant vectors such as recombinant lentivirus, recombinant adenovirus, and recombinant adenovirus associated virus.

10. Cell types

[00114] The CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system may be used with any type of cell. In some embodiments, the cell is a bacterial cell, a fungal cell, an archaea cell, a plant cell or an

animal cell. In some embodiments, the cell may be an ENCODE cell line, including but not limited to, GM12878, K562, H1 human embryonic stem cells, HeLa-S3, HepG2, HUVEC, SK-N-SH, IMR90, A549, MCF7, HMEC or LHCM, CD14+, CD20+, primary heart or liver cells, differentiated H1 cells, 8988T, Adult_CD4_naive, Adult_CD4_Th0, Adult_CD4_Th1, AG04449, AG04450, AG09309, AG09319, AG10803, AoAF, AoSMC, BC_Adipose_UHN00001, BC_Adrenal_Gland_H12803N, BC_Bladder_01-11002, BC_Brain_H11058N, BC_Breast_02-03015, BC_Colon_01-11002, BC_Colon_H12817N, BC_Esophagus_01-11002, BC_Esophagus_H12817N, BC_Jejunum_H12817N, BC_Kidney_01-11002, BC_Kidney_H12817N, BC_Left_Ventricle_N41, BC_Leukocyte_UHN00204, BC_Liver_01-11002, BC_Lung_01-11002, BC_Lung_H12817N, BC_Pancreas_H12817N, BC_Penis_H12817N, BC_Pericardium_H12529N, BC_Placenta_UHN00189, BC_Prostate_Gland_H12817N, BC_Rectum_N29, BC_Skeletal_Muscle_01-11002, BC_Skeletal_Muscle_H12817N, BC_Skin_01-11002, BC_Small_Intestine_01-11002, BC_Spleen_H12817N, BC_Stomach_01-11002, BC_Stomach_H12817N, BC_Testis_N30, BC_Uterus_BN0765, BE2_C, BG02ES, BG02ES-EBD, BJ, bone_marrow_HS27a, bone_marrow_HS5, bone_marrow_MSC, Breast_OC, Caco-2, CD20+_RO01778, CD20+_RO01794, CD34+_Mobilized, CD4+_Naive_Wb11970640, CD4+_Naive_Wb78495824, Cerebellum_OC, Cerebrum_frontal_OC, Chorion, CLL, CMK, Colo829, Colon_BC, Colon_OC, Cord_CD4_naive, Cord_CD4_Th0, Cord_CD4_Th1, Decidua, Dnd41, ECC-1, Endometrium_OC, Esophagus_BC, Fibrobl, Fibrobl_GM03348, FibroP, FibroP_AG08395, FibroP_AG08396, FibroP_AG20443, Frontal_cortex_OC, GC_B_cell, Gliobla, GM04503, GM04504, GM06990, GM08714, GM10248, GM10266, GM10847, GM12801, GM12812, GM12813, GM12864, GM12865, GM12866, GM12867, GM12868, GM12869, GM12870, GM12871, GM12872, GM12873, GM12874, GM12875, GM12878-XiMat, GM12891, GM12892, GM13976, GM13977, GM15510, GM18505, GM18507, GM18526, GM18951, GM19099, GM19193, GM19238, GM19239, GM19240, GM20000, H0287, H1-neurons, H7-hESC, H9ES, H9ES-AFP-, H9ES-AFP+, H9ES-CM, H9ES-E, H9ES-EB, H9ES-EBD, HAc, HAEpiC, HA-h, HAL, HAoAF, HAoAF_6090101.11, HAoAF_6111301.9, HAoEC, HAoEC_7071706.1, HAoEC_8061102.1, HA-sp, HBMEC, HBVP, HBVSMC, HCF, HCFaa, HCH, HCH_0011308.2P, HCH_8100808.2, HCM, HConF, HCPEpiC, HCT-116, Heart_OC, Heart_STL003, HEEpiC, HEK293, HEK293T, HEK293-T-

REx, Hepatocytes, HFDPC, HFDPC_0100503.2, HFDPC_0102703.3, HFF, HFF-Myc, HFL11W, HFL24W, HGF, HHSEC, HIPEpiC, HL-60, HMEpC, HMEpC_6022801.3, HMF, hMNC-CB, hMNC-CB_8072802.6, hMNC-CB_9111701.6, hMNC-PB, hMNC-PB_0022330.9, hMNC-PB_0082430.9, hMSC-AT, hMSC-AT_0102604.12, hMSC-AT_9061601.12, hMSC-BM, hMSC-BM_0050602.11, hMSC-BM_0051105.11, hMSC-UC, hMSC-UC_0052501.7, hMSC-UC_0081101.7, HMVEC-dAd, HMVEC-dBl-Ad, HMVEC-dBl-Neo, HMVEC-dLy-Ad, HMVEC-dLy-Neo, HMVEC-dNeo, HMVEC-LBl, HMVEC-LLy, HNPCEpiC, HOB, HOB_0090202.1, HOB_0091301, HPAEC, HPAEpiC, HPAF, HPC-PL, HPC-PL_0032601.13, HPC-PL_0101504.13, HPDE6-E6E7, HPdLF, HPF, HPIEpC, HPIEpC_9012801.2, HPIEpC_9041503.2, HRCEpiC, HRE, HRGEC, HRPEpiC, HSaVEC, HSaVEC_0022202.16, HSaVEC_9100101.15, HSMM, HSMM_emb, HSMM_FSHD, HSMMtube, HSMMtube_emb, HSMMtube_FSHD, HT-1080, HTR8svn, Huh-7, Huh-7.5, HVMF, HVMF_6091203.3, HVMF_6100401.3, HWP, HWP_0092205, HWP_8120201.5, iPS, iPS_CWRU1, iPS_hFib2_iPS4, iPS_hFib2_iPS5, iPS_NiHi11, iPS_NiHi7, Ishikawa, Jurkat, Kidney_BC, Kidney_OC, LHCN-M2, LHSR, Liver_OC, Liver_STL004, Liver_STL011, LNCaP, Loucy, Lung_BC, Lung_OC, Lymphoblastoid_cell_line, M059J, MCF10A-Er-Src, MCF-7, MDA-MB-231, Medullo, Medullo_D341, Mel_2183, Melano, Monocytes-CD14+, Monocytes-CD14+_RO01746, Monocytes-CD14+_RO01826, MRT_A204, MRT_G401, MRT_TTC549, Myometr, Naive_B_cell, NB4, NH-A, NHBE, NHBE_RA, NHDF, NHDF_0060801.3, NHDF_7071701.2, NHDF-Ad, NHDF-neo, NHEK, NHEM.f_M2, NHEM.f_M2_5071302.2, NHEM.f_M2_6022001, NHEM_M2, NHEM_M2_7011001.2, NHEM_M2_7012303, NHLF, NT2-D1, Olf_neurosphere, Osteobl, ovc4r-3, PANC-1, Pancreas_OC, PanIsletD, PanIslets, PBDE, PBDEFetal, PBMC, PFSK-1, pHTE, Pons_OC, PrEC, ProgFib, Prostate, Prostate_OC, Psoas_muscle_OC, Raji, RCC_7860, RPMI-7951, RPTEC, RWPE1, SAEC, SH-SY5Y, Skeletal_Muscle_BC, SkMC, SKMC, SkMC_8121902.17, SkMC_9011302, SK-N-MC, SK-N-SH_RA, Small_intestine_OC, Spleen_OC, Stellate, Stomach_BC, T_cells_CD4+, T-47D, T98G, TBEC, Th1, Th1_Wb33676984, Th1_Wb54553204, Th17, Th2, Th2_Wb33676984, Th2_Wb54553204, Treg_Wb78495824, Treg_Wb83319432, U2OS, U87, UCH-1, Urothelia, WERI-Rb-1, and WI-38.

11. Kits

[00115] Provided herein is a kit, which may be used to activate gene expression of a target gene. The kit comprises a composition for activating gene expression, as described above, and instructions for using said composition. Instructions included in kits may be affixed to packaging material or may be included as a package insert. While the instructions are typically written or printed materials they are not limited to such. Any medium capable of storing such instructions and communicating them to an end user is contemplated by this disclosure. Such media include, but are not limited to, electronic storage media (*e.g.*, magnetic discs, tapes, cartridges, chips), optical media (*e.g.*, CD ROM), and the like. As used herein, the term "instructions" may include the address of an internet site that provides the instructions.

[00116] The composition for activating gene expression may include a modified AAV vector and a nucleotide sequence encoding a CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system, as described above. The CRISPR/Cas9-based gene activation system may include CRISPR/Cas9-based acetyltransferase, as described above, that specifically binds and targets a cis-regulatory region or trans-regulatory region of a target gene. The CRISPR/Cas9-based acetyltransferase, as described above, may be included in the kit to specifically bind and target a particular regulatory region of the target gene.

12. Examples

[00117] The foregoing may be better understood by reference to the following examples, which are presented for purposes of illustration and are not intended to limit the scope of the invention.

EXAMPLE 1

Methods and Materials – Activator

[00118] **Cell lines and transfection.** HEK293T cells were procured from the American Tissue Collection Center (ATCC, Manassas VA) through the Duke University Cell Culture Facility. Cells were cultured in Dulbecco's modified Eagle's medium (DMEM) supplemented with 10% FBS and 1% penicillin/streptomycin and maintained at 37°C and 5% CO₂. Transfections were performed in 24-well plates using 375 ng of respective dCas9 expression vector and 125 ng of equimolar pooled or individual gRNA expression vectors mixed with Lipofectamine 2000 (Life Technologies, cat. #11668019) as per manufacturer's instruction. For ChIP-qPCR experiments,

HEK293T cells were transfected in 15 cm dishes with Lipofectamine 2000 and 30 µg of respective dCas9 expression vector and 10 µg of equimolar pooled gRNA expression vectors as per manufacturer's instruction.

[00119] Plasmid constructs. pcDNA-dCas9^{VP64} (dCas9^{VP64}; Addgene, plasmid #47107) was used (Perez-Pinera, P. et al, *Nature methods* 10:973-976 (2013)). An HA epitope tag was added to dCas9 (no effector) by removing the VP64 effector domain from dCas9^{VP64} via AscI/PacI restriction sites and using isothermal assembly (Gibson et al. *Nat. Methods* 6:343-345 (2009)) to include an annealed set of oligos containing the appropriate sequence as per manufacturers instruction (NEB cat. #2611). pcDNA-dCas9^{FLp300} (dCas9^{FLp300}) was created by amplifying full-length p300 from pcDNA3.1-p300 (Addgene, plasmid #23252) (Chen et al. *EMBO J.* 21:6539-6548 (2002)) in two separate fragments and cloning these fragments into the dCas9^{VP64} backbone via isothermal assembly. A substitution in the full-length p300 protein (L553M), located outside of the HAT Core region, was identified in dCas9^{FLp300} and in the precursor pcDNA3.1-p300 during sequence validation. pcDNA-dCas9^{p300 Core} (dCas9^{p300 Core}) was generated by first amplifying amino acids 1048 – 1664 of human p300 from cDNA and then subcloning the resulting amplicon into pCR-Blunt (pCR-Blunt^{p300 Core}) (Life Technologies cat. #K2700). An AscI site, HA-epitope tag, and a PmeI site were added by PCR amplification of the p300 Core from pCR-Blunt^{p300 Core} and subsequently this amplicon was cloned into pCR-Blunt (pCR-Blunt^{p300 Core + HA}) (Life Technologies cat. #K2700). The HA-tagged p300 Core was cloned from pCR-Blunt^{p300 Core + HA} into the dCas9^{VP64} backbone via shared AscI/PmeI restriction sites. pcDNA-dCas9^{p300 Core (D1399Y)} (dCas9^{p300 Core (D1399Y)}) was generated by amplification of the p300 Core from dCas9^{p300 Core} in overlapping fragments with primer sets including the specified nucleic acid mutations, with a subsequent round of linkage PCR and cloning into the dCas9^{p300 Core} backbone using shared AscI/PmeI restriction sites. All PCR amplifications were carried out using Q5 high-fidelity DNA polymerase (NEB cat. #M0491). Protein sequences of all dCas9 constructs are shown in FIGS. 15A-15J.

[00120] *ILIRN*, *MYOD*, and *OCT4* promoter gRNA protospacers have been described previously (Perez-Pinera, P. et al, *Nature methods* 10:973-976 (2013); Hu, J. et al., *Nucleic Acids Res* 42:4375-4390 (2014)). *Neisseria meningitidis* dCas9^{VP64} (*Nm*-dCas9^{VP64}) was obtained from Addgene (plasmid #48676). *Nm*-dCas9^{p300 Core} was created by amplifying the HA-tagged p300 Core from dCas9^{p300 Core} with primers to facilitate subcloning into the AgeI/AgeI-digested *Nm*-

dCas9^{VP64} backbone using isothermal assembly (NEB cat. # 2611). *IL1RN* TALE^{p300 Core} TALEs were generated by subcloning the HA-tagged p300 Core domain from dCas9^{p300 Core} into previously published (Perez-Pinera, P. et al, *Nature methods* 10:973-976 (2013)) *IL1RN* TALE^{VP64} constructs via shared AscI/PmeI restriction sites. *IL1RN* TALE target sites are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 *IL1RN* TAL effector information.

Name	Target Site	SEQ ID NO	Location (GRCh37/hg19 assembly)
<i>IL1RN</i> TALE ^{VP64 A}	GGGCTCCTCCTTGACT	15	chr2:113875431-113875447
<i>IL1RN</i> TALE ^{VP64 B}	ACGCAGATAAGAACCAGT	16	chr2:113875291-113875308
<i>IL1RN</i> TALE ^{VP64 C}	GGCATCAAGTCAGCCAT	17	chr2:113875356-113875372
<i>IL1RN</i> TALE ^{VP64 D}	AGCCTGAGTCACCCTCCT	18	chr2:113875321-113875338
<i>IL1RN</i> TALE ^{p300 Core A}	GGGCTCCTCCTTGACT	19	chr2:113875431-113875447
<i>IL1RN</i> TALE ^{p300 Core B}	ACGCAGATAAGAACCAGT	20	chr2:113875291-113875308
<i>IL1RN</i> TALE ^{p300 Core C}	GGCATCAAGTCAGCCAT	21	chr2:113875356-113875372
<i>IL1RN</i> TALE ^{p300 Core D}	AGCCTGAGTCACCCTCCT	22	chr2:113875321-113875338

[00121] *ICAMI* ZF^{VP64} and *ICAMI* ZF^{p300 Core} were constructed by subcloning the *ICAMI* ZF from pMX-CD54-31Opt-VP64⁵⁴ into dCas9^{VP64} and dCas9^{p300 Core} backbones, respectively, using isothermal assembly (NEB cat. #2611). Protein sequences of *ICAMI* ZF constructs are shown in FIG. 16. Transfection efficiency was routinely above 90% as assayed by co-transfection of PL-SIN-EF1 α -EGFP (Addgene plasmid #21320) and gRNA empty vector in all experiments. All *Streptococcus pyogenes* gRNAs were annealed and cloned into pZdonor-pSPgRNA (Addgene plasmid # 47108) for expression (Cong, L. et al., *Science* 339:819-823 (2013)) with slight modifications using NEB BbsI and T4 ligase (Cat. #s R0539 and M0202). *Nm*-dCas9 gRNA oligos were rationally designed using published PAM requirements (Esvelt, K.M. et al., *Nature Methods* 10:1116-1121 (2013)), and then cloned into pZDonor-Nm-Cas9-gRNA-hU6 (Addgene, plasmid #61366) via BbsI sites. Plasmids are available through Addgene (Table 2).

Table 2 Referenced plasmids in this study available at Addgene.

Plasmid Name	Addgene Plasmid #
pcDNA-dCas9 ^{VP64} (SEQ ID NO: 139)	47107
pcDNA-dCas9-HA (SEQ ID NO: 138)	61355

pcDNA3.1-p300	23252
pcDNA-dCas9 ^{FLp300} (SEQ ID NO: 140)	61356
pcDNA-dCas9 ^{p300 Core} (SEQ ID NO: 141)	61357
pcDNA-dCas9 ^{p300 Core (D1399Y)} (SEQ ID NO: 142)	61358
pcDNA-dCas9 ^{p300 Core (1645/1646 RR/EE)} (SEQ ID NO: 143)	61359
pcDNA-dCas9 ^{p300 Core (C1204R)} (SEQ ID NO: 144)	61361
pcDNA-dCas9 ^{p300 Core (Y1467F)} (SEQ ID NO: 145)	61362
pcDNA-dCas9 ^{p300 Core (1396/1397 SY/WW)} (SEQ ID NO: 146)	61363
pcDNA-dCas9 ^{p300 Core (H1415A/E1423A/Y1424A/L1428S/Y1430A/H1434A)} (SEQ ID NO: 147)	61364
pZdonor-pSPgRNA	47108
pcDNA3.1-300(HAT-)	23254
pcDNA3.3-Nm-dCas9 ^{VP64} (SEQ ID NO: 148)	48676
pcDNA3.3-Nm-dCas9 ^{p300 Core} (SEQ ID NO: 149)	61365
pZDonor-NmCas9-gRNA-hU6	61366
PL-SIN-EF1 α -EGFP	21320

[00122] All gRNA protospacer targets are listed in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3 gRNA information.

Target Location	Protospacer Sequence (5'-3')	SEQ ID NO	Genomic Location (GRCh37/hg19 Assembly)
<i>IL1RN</i> Promoter A	TGTACTCTCTGAGGTGCTC	23	chr2:113875442-113875460
<i>IL1RN</i> Promoter B	ACGCAGATAAGAACCAGTT	24	chr2:113875291-113875309
<i>IL1RN</i> Promoter C	CATCAAGTCAGCCATCAGC	25	chr2:113875358-113875376
<i>IL1RN</i> Promoter D	GAGTCACCCTCCTGGAAAC	26	chr2:113875326-113875344
<i>MYOD</i> Promoter A	CCTGGGCTCCGGGGCGTTT	27	chr11:17741056-17741074
<i>MYOD</i> Promoter B	GGCCCCTGCGGCCACCCCG	28	chr11:17740969-17740987
<i>MYOD</i> Promoter C	CTCCCTCCCTGCCCCGGTAG	29	chr11:17740897-17740915
<i>MYOD</i> Promoter D	AGGTTTGGAAAGGGCGTGC	30	chr11:17740837-17740855
<i>OCT4</i>	ACTCCACTGCACTCCAGTCT	31	chr6:31138711-31138730

Promoter A			
<i>OCT4</i> Promoter B	TCTGTGGGGGACCTGCACTG	32	chr6:31138643-31138662
<i>OCT4</i> Promoter C	GGGGCGCCAGTTGTGTCTCC	33	chr6:31138613-31138632
<i>OCT4</i> Promoter D	ACACCATTGCCACCACCATT	34	chr6:31138574-31138593
<i>MYOD</i> DRR A	TGTTTTTCAGCTTCCAACT	35	chr11:17736528-17736546
<i>MYOD</i> DRR B	CATGAAGACAGCAGAAGCC	36	chr11:17736311-17736329
<i>MYOD</i> DRR C	GGCCACATTCTTTCCAG	37	chr11:17736158-17736176
<i>MYOD</i> DRR D	GGCTGGATTGGGTTTCCAG	38	chr11:17736065-17736083
<i>MYOD</i> CE A	CAACTGAGTCCTGAGGTTT	39	chr11:17721347-17721365
<i>MYOD</i> CE B	CTCACAGCACAGCCAGTGT	40	chr11:17721257-17721275
<i>MYOD</i> CE C	CAGCAGCTGGTCACAAAGC	41	chr11:17721200-17721218
<i>MYOD</i> CE D	CTTCCTATAAACTTCTGAG	42	chr11:17721139-17721157
<i>OCT4</i> PE A	AGTGATAAGACACCCGCTTT	43	chr6:31139524-31139543
<i>OCT4</i> PE B	CAGACATCTAATACCACGGT	44	chr6:31139604-31139623
<i>OCT4</i> PE C	AGGGAGAACGGGGCCTACCG	45	chr6:31139620-31139639
<i>OCT4</i> PE D	ACTTCAGGTTCAAAGAAGCC	46	chr6:31139725-31139744
<i>OCT4</i> PE E	TTTTCCCCACCCAGGGCCTA	47	chr6:31139671-31139690
<i>OCT4</i> PE F	CCCTGGGTGGGGAAAACCAG	48	chr6:31139675-31139694
<i>OCT4</i> DE A	GGAGGAACATGCTTCGGAAC	49	chr6:31140809-31140828
<i>OCT4</i> DE B	GTGCCGTGATGGTTCTGTCC	50	chr6:31140864-31140883
<i>OCT4</i> DE C	GGTCTGCCGGAAGGTCTACA	51	chr6:31140707-31140726
<i>OCT4</i> DE D	TCGGCCTTTAACTGCCCAA	52	chr6:31140757-31140776
<i>OCT4</i> DE E	GCATGACAAAGGTGCCGTGA	53	chr6:31140875-31140894
<i>OCT4</i> DE F	CCTGCCTTTTGGGCAGTTAA	54	chr6:31140764-31140783
HS2 A	AATATGTCACATTCTGTCTC	55	chr11:5301800-5301819
HS2 B	GGACTATGGGAGGTCACTAA	56	chr11:5302108-5302127
HS2 C	GAAGGTTACACAGAACCAGA	57	chr11:5302033-5302052
HS2 D	GCCCTGTAAGCATCCTGCTG	58	chr11:5301898-5301917

Table 4

<u>Target Location</u>	<u>Protospacer Sequence</u> (5'- 3')	SEQ ID NO	<u>Genomic Location</u> (GRCh37/hg19 Assembly)
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<i>HBG</i> Promoter A	CCACTGCTAACTGAAAGAGA	59	chr11:5271570-5271589
<i>HBG</i> Promoter B	AGCCACAGTTTCAGCGCAGT	60	chr11:5271692-5271711
<i>HBG</i> Promoter C	CTGTTTCATCTTAGAAAAAT	61	chr11:5271793-5271812
<i>HBG</i> Promoter D	GAATGTTCTTTGGCAGGTAC	62	chr11:5271942-5271961
<i>HBG</i> Promoter E	CGCACATCTTATGTCTTAGA	63	chr11:5272021-5272040
<i>HBE</i> Promoter A	CTTAAGAGAGCTAGAACTGG	64	chr11:5291618-5291637
<i>HBE</i> Promoter B	TCCCAAAGTACAGTACCTTG	65	chr11:5291758-5291777
<i>HBE</i> Promoter C	TCCCTAGAGAGGACAGACAG	66	chr11:5291785-5291804
<i>HBE</i> Promoter D	TCATAGAGAAATGAAAAGAG	67	chr11:5291840-5291859
<i>HBE</i> Promoter E	ATAATATACCCTGACTCCTA	68	chr11:5292038-5292057
HS2 A	AGGCCACCTGCAAGATAAAT	69	chr11:5301662-5301681
HS2 B	TGTTGTTATCAATTGCCATA	70	chr11:5301708-5301727
HS2 C	ATCCCTTCCAGCATCCTCAT	71	chr11:5302187-5302206
HS2 D	GTGCTTCAAAACCATTGCT	72	chr11:5302245-5302264
HS2 E	GATACATGTTTTATTCTTAT	73	chr11:5302306-5302325

[00123] Western Blotting. 20 µg of protein was loaded for SDS PAGE and transferred onto a nitrocellulose membrane for western blots. Primary antibodies (α -FLAG; Sigma-Aldrich cat. #F7425 and α -GAPDH; Cell Signaling Technology cat. #14C10) were used at a 1:1000 dilution in TBST + 5% Milk. Secondary α -Rabbit HRP (Sigma-Aldrich cat. #A6154) was used at a 1:5000 dilution in TBST + 5% Milk. Membranes were exposed after addition of ECL (Bio-Rad cat. #170-5060).

[00124] Quantitative reverse-transcription PCR. RNA was isolated from transfected cells using the RNeasy Plus mini kit (Qiagen cat. #74136) and 500 ng of purified RNA was used as template for cDNA synthesis (Life Technologies, cat. #11754). Real-time PCR was performed using PerfeCTa SYBR Green FastMix (Quanta Biosciences, cat. #95072) and a CFX96 Real-Time PCR Detection System with a C1000 Thermal Cycler (Bio-Rad). Baselines were subtracted using the baseline subtraction curve fit analysis mode and thresholds were automatically calculated using the Bio-Rad CFX Manager software version 2.1. Results are expressed as fold change above control mock transfected cells (No DNA) after normalization to GAPDH expression using the $\Delta\Delta C_t$ method (Schmittgen et al., *Nat. Protoc.* 3:1101-1108 (2008)). All qPCR primers and conditions are listed in Table 5.

Table 5 Quantitative reverse transcription PCR and ChIP-qPCR primers and conditions.

Target	Forward Primer (5'-3')	SEQ ID NO	Reverse Primer (5'-3')	SEQ ID NO	Cycling Parameters
<i>GAPDH</i>	CAATGACCCCTTCATT GACC	74	TTGATTTTGGAGGGA TCTCG	75	95°C 30 sec 95°C 5 sec 53°C 20 sec 45X
<i>IL1RN</i>	GGAATCCATGGAGGG AAGAT	76	TGTTCTCGCTCAGGTC AGTG	77	95°C 30 sec 95°C 5 sec 58°C 20 sec 45X
<i>MYOD</i>	TCCCTCTTTCACGGTC TCAC	78	AACACCCGACTGCTG TATCC	79	95°C 30 sec 95°C 5 sec 53°C 20 sec 45X
<i>OCT4</i>	CGAAAGAGAAAGCGA ACCAGTATCGAGAAC	80	CGTTGTGCATAGTCG CTGCTTGATCGC	81	95°C 30 sec 95°C 5 sec 53°C 20 sec 45X
<i>HBB</i>	GCACGTGGATCCTGAG AACT	82	ATTGGACAGCAAGAA AGCGAG	83	95°C 30 sec 95°C 5 sec 58°C 20 sec 45X
<i>HBD</i>	GCACGTGGATCCTGAG AACT	84	CAGGAAACAGTCCAG GATCTCA	85	95°C 30 sec 95°C 5 sec 58°C 20 sec 45X
<i>HBG</i>	GCTGAGTGAAGTGCAC TGTGA	86	GAATTCTTTGCCGAA ATGGA	87	95°C 30 sec 95°C 5 sec 58°C 20 sec 45X
<i>HBE</i>	TCACTAGCAAGCTCTC AGGC	88	AACAACGAGGAGTCT GCCC	89	95°C 30 sec 95°C 5 sec 62°C 20 sec 45X
<i>ICAM1</i>	GCAGACAGTGACCATC TACAGCTT	90	CAATCCCTCTCGTCC AGTCG	91	95°C 30 sec 95°C 5 sec 58°C 20 sec 45X
HS2 ChIP Region 1	TGCTTGGACTATGGGA GGTC	92	GCAGGTGCTTCAAAA CCATT	93	95°C 30 sec 95°C 5 sec 60°C 20 sec 45X
HS2 ChIP Region 2	TCAGGTGGTCAGCTTC TCCT	94	AAGCAAACCTTCTGG CTCAA	95	95°C 30 sec 95°C 5 sec 60°C 20 sec 45X
HS2 ChIP Region 3	CCACACAGGTGAACCC TTTT	96	GGACACATGCTCACA TACGG	97	95°C 30 sec 95°C 5 sec 60°C 20 sec 45X
<i>HBE</i> ChIP Region 1	ATTCGATCCATGTGCC TGA	98	CAATGCTGGAATTTG TGGAA	99	95°C 30 sec 95°C 5 sec 60°C 20 sec 45X
<i>HBE</i> ChIP Region 2	GGGGTGATTCCCTAGA GAGG	100	AAGCAGGACAGACA GGCAAG	101	95°C 30 sec 95°C 5 sec 60°C 20 sec 45X
<i>HBE</i> ChIP Region 3	GAGGGTCAGCAGTGA TGGAT	102	TGGAAAAGGAGAATG GGAGA	103	95°C 30 sec 95°C 5 sec 60°C 20 sec 45X
<i>HBG1/2</i> ChIP Region 1	TGGTCAAGTTTGCCTT GTCA	104	GGAATGACTGAATCG GAACAA	105	95°C 30 sec 95°C 5 sec 60°C 20 sec 45X
<i>HBG1/2</i> ChIP	CCTCCAGCATCTTCCA CATT	106	GAAGCACCCCTTCAGC AGTTC	107	95°C 30 sec 95°C 5 sec

Region 2					60°C 20 sec 45X
<i>HBG1/2</i> ChIP Region 3	CCACAGTTTCAGCGCA GTAATA	108	ATCAGCCAGCACACA CACTT	109	95°C 30 sec 95°C 5 sec 60°C 20 sec 45X
<i>IL1RN</i> ChIP Region 1	CCCTGTCAGGAGGGAC AGAT	110	GGCTCACCGGAAGCA TGAAT	111	95°C 30 sec 95°C 5 sec 60°C 20 sec 45X
<i>IL1RN</i> ChIP Region 2	AAGCTACAAGCAGGTT CGCT	112	AATAACAGGGTCCAT CCCGC	113	95°C 30 sec 95°C 5 sec 60°C 20 sec 45X
<i>IL1RN</i> ChIP Region 3	TGTTCCCTCCACCTGG AATA	114	GGGAAAATCCAAAGC AGGAT	115	95°C 30 sec 95°C 5 sec 60°C 20 sec 45X
<i>IL1RN</i> ChIP Region 4	TCCTAGGTCCCTCAAA AGCA	116	GTCCCCAACGCTCTA ACAAA	117	95°C 30 sec 95°C 5 sec 60°C 20 sec 45X
<i>IL1RN</i> ChIP Region 5	GTTAGAGCGTTGGGGA CCTT	118	CACATGCAGAGAACT GAGCTG	119	95°C 30 sec 95°C 5 sec 60°C 20 sec 45X
<i>IL1RN</i> ChIP Region 6	GTTGGGGTAAGCACG AAGG	120	TTTCCAGGAGGGTGA CTCAG	121	95°C 30 sec 95°C 5 sec 60°C 20 sec 45X
<i>IL1RN</i> ChIP Region 7	TTCTCTGCATGTGACC TCCC	122	ACACACTCACAGAGG GTTGG	123	95°C 30 sec 95°C 5 sec 60°C 20 sec 45X
<i>IL1RN</i> ChIP Region 8	TGAGTCACCCTCCTGG AAAC	124	CTCCTTCCAGAGCAC CTCAG	125	95°C 30 sec 95°C 5 sec 60°C 20 sec 45X
<i>IL1RN</i> ChIP Region 9	GCTGGGCTCCTCCTTG TACT	126	GCTGCTGCCATAAA GTAGC	127	95°C 30 sec 95°C 5 sec 60°C 20 sec 45X
<i>IL1RN</i> ChIP Region 10	GGACTGTGGCCCAGGT ACT	128	GGCCTCATAGGACAG GAGGT	129	95°C 30 sec 95°C 5 sec 60°C 20 sec 45X
<i>IL1RN</i> ChIP Region 11	TTATGGGCAGCAGCTC AGTT	130	GACATTTTCCTGGAC GCTTG	131	95°C 30 sec 95°C 5 sec 60°C 20 sec 45X
<i>IL1RN</i> ChIP Region 12	CCCTCCCCATGGCTTT AGGT	132	AGCTCCATGCGCTTG ACATT	133	95°C 30 sec 95°C 5 sec 60°C 20 sec 45X
<i>IL1RN</i> ChIP Region 13	AGCGTCCAGGAAAAT GTCAA	134	ATGACCCTCACACTC CAAGG	135	95°C 30 sec 95°C 5 sec 60°C 20 sec 45X
Upstream β - actin ChIP NEG CTRL	GTTGGGTGCTCCAGCT TTTA	136	CCTCAAAACTCCTGG ACTCG	137	95°C 30 sec 95°C 5 sec 60°C 20 sec 45X

[00125] RNA-seq. RNA-seq was performed using three replicates per experimental condition. RNA was isolated from transfected cells using the RNeasy Plus mini kit (Qiagen cat. #74136) and 1 µg of purified mRNA was used as template for cDNA synthesis and library construction using the PrepX RNA-Seq Library Kit (Wafergen Biosystems, cat. #400039). Libraries were prepared using the Apollo 324 liquid handling platform, as per manufacturer's instruction. Indexed libraries were validated for quality and size distribution using the TapeStation 2200 (Agilent) and quantified by qPCR using the KAPA Library Quantification Kit (KAPA Biosystems; KK4835) prior to multiplex pooling and sequencing at the Duke University Genome Sequencing Shared Resource facility. Libraries were pooled and then 50 bp single-end reads were sequenced on a HiSeq 2500 (Illumina), de-multiplexed and then aligned to the HG19 transcriptome using Bowtie 2 (Langmead et al. Nat. Methods 9:357-359 (2012)). Transcript abundance was calculated using the SAMtools (Li et al. Bioinformatics 25:2078:2079 (2009)) suite and differential expression was determined in R using the DESeq2 analysis package. Multiple hypothesis correction was performed using the method of Benjamini and Hochberg with a FDR of < 5%. RNA-seq data is deposited in the NCBI's Gene Expression Omnibus and is accessible through GEO Series accession number GSE66742.

[00126] ChIP-qPCR. HEK293T cells were co-transfected with four HS2 enhancer gRNA constructs and indicated dCas9 fusion expression vectors in 15 cm plates in biological triplicate for each condition tested. Cells were cross-linked with 1% Formaldehyde (final concentration; Sigma F8775-25ML) for 10 min at RT and then the reaction was stopped by the addition of glycine to a final concentration of 125 mM. From each plate ~2.5e7 cells were used for H3K27ac ChIP-enrichment. Chromatin was sheared to a median fragment size of 250 bp using a Bioruptor XL (Diagenode). H3K27ac enrichment was performed by incubation with 5 µg of Abcam ab4729 and 200 µl of sheep anti-rabbit IgG magnetic beads (Life Technologies 11203D) for 16 hrs at 4°C. Cross-links were reversed via overnight incubation at 65°C with sodium dodecyl sulfate, and DNA was purified using MinElute DNA purification columns (Qiagen). 10 ng of DNA was used for subsequent qPCR reactions using a CFX96 Real-Time PCR Detection System with a C1000 Thermal Cycler (Bio-Rad). Baselines were subtracted using the baseline subtraction curve fit analysis mode and thresholds were automatically calculated using the Bio-Rad CFX Manager software version 2.1. Results are expressed as fold change above cells co-transfected with dCas9 and four HS2 gRNAs after normalization to β-actin enrichment using the

$\Delta\Delta$ Ct method (Schmittgen et al., *Nat. Protoc.* 3:1101-1108 (2008)). All ChIP-qPCR primers and conditions are listed in Table 5.

EXAMPLE 2

A dCas9 fusion to the p300 HAT domain activates target genes

[00127] The full-length p300 protein was fused to dCas9 (dCas9^{FLp300}; FIGS. 1A-1B) and assayed for its capacity for transactivation by transient co-transfection of human HEK293T cells with four gRNAs targeting the endogenous promoters of *ILIRN*, *MYOD1* (*MYOD*), and *POU5F1/OCT4* (*OCT4*) (FIG. 1C). A combination of four gRNAs targeting each promoter was used. dCas9^{FLp300} was well expressed and induced modest activation above background compared to the canonical dCas9 activator fused to the VP64 acidic activation domain (dCas9^{VP64}) (FIGS. 1A-1C). The full-length p300 protein is a promiscuous acetyltransferase which interacts with a multitude of endogenous proteins, largely via its termini. In order to mitigate these interactions the contiguous region of full-length p300 (2414 aa) solely required for inherent HAT activity (amino acids 1048-1664), known as the p300 HAT core domain (p300 Core) was isolated. When fused to the C-terminus of dCas9 (dCas9^{p300 Core}, FIGS. 1A-1B) the p300 Core domain induced high levels of transcription from endogenous gRNA-targeted promoters (FIG. 1C). When targeted to the *ILIRN* and *MYOD* promoters, the dCas9^{p300 Core} fusion displayed significantly higher levels of transactivation than dCas9^{VP64} (*P*-value 0.01924 and 0.0324 respectively; FIG. 1). These dCas9-effector fusion proteins were expressed at similar levels (FIG. 1B, FIG. 7) indicating that the observed differences were due to differences to transactivation capacity. Additionally, no changes to target gene expression were observed when the effector fusions were transfected without gRNAs (FIG. 8). For FIG. 8, dCas9 fusion proteins were transiently co-transfected with an empty gRNA vector backbone and mRNA expression of *ILIRN*, *MYOD*, and *OCT4* was assayed as in the main text. Red dashed line indicates background expression level from No DNA-transfected cells. n=2 independent experiments, error bars: s.e.m., no significant activation was observed for any target gene assayed.

[00128] To ensure that the p300 Core acetyltransferase activity was responsible for gene transactivation using the dCas9^{p300 Core} fusion, a panel of dCas9^{p300 Core} HAT-domain mutant fusion proteins was screened (FIG. 7). A single inactivating amino acid substitution within the HAT core domain (WT residue D1399 of full-length p300) of dCas9^{p300 Core} (dCas9^{p300 Core} (D1399Y))

(FIG. 1A) abolished the transactivation capacity of the fusion protein (FIG. 1C), demonstrating that intact p300 Core acetyltransferase activity was required for dCas9^{p300 Core}-mediated transactivation.

EXAMPLE 3

dCas9^{p300 Core} activates genes from proximal and distal enhancers

[00129] As p300 plays a role and is localized at endogenous enhancers, the dCas9^{p300 Core} may effectively induce transcription from distal regulatory regions with appropriately targeted gRNAs. The distal regulatory region (DRR) and core enhancer (CE) of the human *MYOD* locus was targeted through co-transfection of four gRNAs targeted to each region and either dCas9^{VP64} or dCas9^{p300 Core} (FIG. 2A). Compared to a mock-transfected control, dCas9^{VP64} did not show any induction when targeted to the *MYOD* DRR or CE region. In contrast, dCas9^{p300 Core} induced significant transcription when targeted to either *MYOD* regulatory element with corresponding gRNAs (*P*-value 0.0115 and 0.0009 for the CE and DRR regions respectively). The upstream proximal (PE) and distal (DE) enhancer regions of the human *OCT4* gene were also targeted by co-transfection of six gRNAs and either dCas9^{VP64} or dCas9^{p300 Core} (FIG. 2B). dCas9^{p300 Core} induced significant transcription from these regions (*P*-value ≤ 0.0001 and *P*-value ≤ 0.003 for the DE and PE, respectively), whereas dCas9^{VP64} was unable to activate *OCT4* above background levels when targeted to either the PE or DE regions.

[00130] The well-characterized mammalian β -globin locus control region (LCR) orchestrates transcription of the downstream hemoglobin genes; hemoglobin epsilon 1 (*HBE*, from ~ 11 kb), hemoglobin gamma 1 and 2 (*HBG*, from ~ 30 kb), hemoglobin delta (*HBD*, from ~ 46 kb), and hemoglobin beta (*HBB*, from ~54 kb) (FIG. 2C). DNase hypersensitive sites within the β -globin LCR serve as docking sites for transcriptional and chromatin modifiers, including p300, which coordinate distal target gene expression. Four gRNAs targeting the DNase hypersensitive site 2 within the LCR enhancer region (HS2 enhancer) were generated. These four HS2-targeted gRNAs were co-transfected with dCas9, dCas9^{VP64}, dCas9^{p300 Core}, or dCas9^{p300 Core (D1399Y)}, and the resulting mRNA production from *HBE*, *HBG*, *HBD*, and *HBB* was assayed (FIG. 2C). dCas9, dCas9^{VP64}, and dCas9^{p300 Core (D1399Y)} were unable to transactivate any downstream genes when targeted to the HS2 enhancer. In contrast, targeting of dCas9^{p300 Core} to the HS2 enhancer led to significant expression of the downstream *HBE*, *HBG*, and *HBD* genes (*P*-value ≤ 0.0001 , 0.0056,

and 0.0003 between dCas9^{p300 Core} and mock-transfected cells for *HBE*, *HBG*, and *HBD* respectively). Overall, *HBD* and *HBE* appeared relatively less responsive to synthetic p300 Core-mediated activation from the HS2 enhancer; a finding consistent with lower rates of general transcription from these two genes across several cell lines (FIGS. 9A-9E).

[00131] Nevertheless, with the exception of the most distal *HBB* gene, dCas9^{p300 Core} exhibited a capacity to activate transcription from downstream genes when targeted to all characterized enhancer regions assayed, a capability not observed for dCas9^{VP64}. Together, these results demonstrate that dCas9^{p300 Core} is a potent programmable transcription factor that can be used to regulate gene expression from a variety of promoter-proximal and promoter-distal locations.

EXAMPLE 4

Gene activation by dCas9^{p300 Core} is highly specific

[00132] Recent reports indicate that dCas9 may have widespread off-target binding events in mammalian cells in combination with some gRNAs, which could potentially lead to off-target changes in gene expression. In order to assess the transcriptional specificity of the dCas9^{p300 Core} fusion protein, transcriptome was performed profiling by RNA-seq in cells co-transfected with four *IL1RN*-targeted gRNAs and either dCas9, dCas9^{VP64}, dCas9^{p300 Core}, or dCas9^{p300 Core} (D1399Y). Genome-wide transcriptional changes were compared between dCas9 with no fused effector domain and either dCas9^{VP64}, dCas9^{p300 Core}, or dCas9^{p300 Core} (D1399Y) (FIG. 3). While both dCas9^{VP64} and dCas9^{p300 Core} upregulated all four *IL1RN* isoforms, only the effects of dCas9^{p300 Core} reached genome-wide significance (FIGS. 3A-3B, Table 6; *P*-value 1.0×10^{-3} – 5.3×10^{-4} for dCas9^{VP64}; *P*-value 1.8×10^{-17} – 1.5×10^{-19} for dCas9^{p300 Core})

Table 6 Ten most enriched mRNAs for dCas9 *IL1RN*-targeted RNA-seq experiments

dCas9 ^{VP64} + 4 <i>IL1RN</i> gRNAs compared to dCas9 + 4 <i>IL1RN</i> gRNAs								
	Refseq ID	Gene	Base Mean	log2 Fold Change	lfcSE	stat	pvalue	padj
1	NM_173842	<i>IL1RN</i> (transcript variant 1)	14.764	0.529	0.152	3.48	0.000494857	0.99992134
2	NM_173843	<i>IL1RN</i> (transcript variant 4)	13.606	0.517	0.149	3.47	0.000530109	0.99992134
3	NR_073102	ZNF551	21.505	0.505	0.159	3.17	0.00152863	0.99992134
4	NM_000577	<i>IL1RN</i> (transcript variant 3)	14.890	0.497	0.152	3.28	0.001039353	0.99992134
5	NM_001077441	BCLAF1(transcript variant 3)	437.814	0.482	0.153	3.14	0.001665925	0.99992134
6	NM_173841	<i>IL1RN</i> (transcript variant 2)	13.711	0.448	0.15	3.00	0.002716294	0.99992134
7	NM_001268	<i>RCBTB2</i>	46.265	0.440	0.167	2.64	0.008335513	0.99992134

8	NM_000922	<i>PDE3B</i>	143.947	0.439	0.167	2.63	0.008471891	0.99992134
9	NM_001077440	<i>BCLAF1</i> (transcript variant 2)	463.743	0.439	0.156	2.82	0.004790762	0.99992134
10	NM_014739	<i>BCLAF1</i> (transcript variant 1)	474.598	0.432	0.158	2.74	0.006232218	0.99992134
dCas9^{p300 Core} + 4 <i>ILIRN</i> gRNAs compared to dCas9 + 4 <i>ILIRN</i> gRNAs								
	Refseq ID	Gene	Base Mean	log2 Fold Change	lfcSE	stat	pvalue	padj
1	NM_173843	<i>ILIRN</i> (transcript variant 4)	45.517	1.548	0.171	9.04	1.52E-19	5.24E-15
2	NM_173841	<i>ILIRN</i> (transcript variant 2)	40.690	1.457	0.171	8.50	1.83E-17	3.16E-13
3	NM_173842	<i>ILIRN</i> (transcript variant 1)	39.568	1.448	0.171	8.45	2.88E-17	3.30E-13
4	NM_000577	<i>ILIRN</i> (transcript variant 3)	41.821	1.437	0.171	8.39	4.88E-17	4.20E-13
5	NM_001429	<i>p300</i>	928.435	0.955	0.171	5.57	2.50E-08	0.000171838
6	NM_002253	<i>KDR</i>	17.477	0.842	0.163	5.17	2.36E-07	0.00135472
7	NM_030797	<i>FAM49A</i>	21.286	0.736	0.166	4.44	8.91E-06	0.043823927
8	NM_012074	<i>DPF3</i>	17.111	0.609	0.164	3.72	0.000202676	0.871938986
9	NM_031476	<i>CRISPLD2</i>	25.148	0.569	0.167	3.41	0.000653132	0.999954424
10	NM_007365	<i>PADI2</i>	99.012	0.554	0.162	3.41	0.000641145	0.999954424
dCas9^{p300 Core (D1399Y)} + 4 <i>ILIRN</i> gRNAs compared to dCas9 + 4 <i>ILIRN</i> gRNAs								
	Refseq ID	Gene	Base Mean	log2 Fold Change	lfcSE	stat	pvalue	padj
1	NM_001429	<i>p300</i>	935.659	1.234	0.198	6.24	4.36E-10	1.49E-05
2	NM_001270493	<i>SREK1</i> (transcript variant 4)	30.118	0.651	0.203	3.20	0.001388089	0.999938051
3	NM_001079802	<i>FKTN</i> (transcript variant 1)	148.558	0.546	0.203	2.69	0.007212168	0.999938051
4	NM_000922	<i>PDE3B</i>	140.122	0.535	0.201	2.66	0.007805491	0.999938051
5	NM_206937	<i>LIG4</i> (transcript variant 2)	30.589	0.521	0.203	2.56	0.010513626	0.999938051
6	NM_001136116	<i>ZNF879</i>	18.421	0.520	0.201	2.59	0.009600802	0.999938051
7	NM_018374	<i>TMEM106B</i> (transcript variant 1)	280.758	0.516	0.196	2.64	0.008329592	0.999938051
8	NM_019863	<i>F8</i> (transcript variant 2)	8.048	0.515	0.178	2.89	0.003827553	0.999938051
9	NM_001193349	<i>MEF2C</i> (transcript variant 5)	18.934	0.510	0.202	2.53	0.011492452	0.999938051
10	NM_183245	<i>INVS</i> (transcript variant 2)	38.545	0.497	0.203	2.45	0.014125973	0.999938051

[00133] In contrast, dCas9^{p300 Core (D1399Y)} did not significantly induce any *ILIRN* expression (FIG. 3C; *P*-value > 0.5 for all 4 *ILIRN* isoforms). Comparative analysis to dCas9 revealed limited dCas9^{p300 Core} off-target gene induction, with only two transcripts induced significantly above background at a false discovery rate (FDR) < 5%: *KDR* (FDR = 1.4×10^{-3}); and *FAM49A* (FDR = 0.04) (FIG. 3B, Table 6). Increased expression of *p300* mRNA was observed in cells transfected with dCas9^{p300 Core} and dCas9^{p300 Core (D1399Y)}. This finding is most likely explained by RNA-seq reads mapping to mRNA from the transiently transfected p300 core fusion domains. Thus the dCas9^{p300 Core} fusion displayed high genome-wide targeted transcriptional specificity and robust gene induction of all four targeted *ILIRN* isoforms.

EXAMPLE 5***dCas9^{p300 Core} acetylates H3K27 at enhancers and promoters***

[00134] Activity of regulatory elements correlates with covalent histone modifications such as acetylation and methylation. Of those histone modifications, acetylation of lysine 27 on histone H3 (H3K27ac) is one of the most widely documented indicators of enhancer activity. Acetylation of H3K27 is catalyzed by p300 and is also correlated with endogenous p300 binding profiles. Therefore H3K27ac enrichment was used as a measurement of relative dCas9^{p300 Core}-mediated acetylation at the genomic target site. To quantify targeted H3K27 acetylation by dCas9^{p300 Core} chromatin immuno-precipitation was performed with an anti-H3K27ac antibody followed by quantitative PCR (ChIP-qPCR) in HEK293T cells co-transfected with four HS2 enhancer-targeted gRNAs and either dCas9, dCas9^{VP64}, dCas9^{p300 Core}, or dCas9^{p300 Core (D1399Y)} (FIG. 4). Three amplicons were analyzed at or around the target site in the HS2 enhancer or within the promoter regions of the *HBE* and *HBG* genes (FIG. 4A). Notably, H3K27ac is enriched in each of these regions in the human K562 erythroid cell line that has a high level of globin gene expression (FIG. 4A). Significant H3K27ac enrichment was observed at the HS2 enhancer target locus compared to treatment with dCas9 in both the dCas9^{VP64} (*P*-value 0.0056 for ChIP Region 1 and *P*-value 0.0029 for ChIP Region 3) and dCas9^{p300 Core} (*P*-value 0.0013 for ChIP Region 1 and *P*-value 0.0069 for ChIP Region 3) co-transfected samples (FIG. 4B).

[00135] A similar trend of H3K27ac enrichment was also observed when targeting the *IL1RN* promoter with dCas9^{VP64} or dCas9^{p300 Core} (FIG. 10). FIG. 10 shows the *IL1RN* locus on GRCh37/hg19 along with *IL1RN* gRNA target sites. In addition, layered ENCODE H3K27ac enrichment from seven cell lines (GM12878, H1-hESC, HSMM, HUVEC, K562, NHEK, and NHLF) is indicated with the vertical range setting set to 50. Tiled *IL1RN* ChIP qPCR amplicons (1–13) are also shown in corresponding locations on GRCh37/hg19. H3K27ac enrichment for dCas9^{VP64} and dCas9^{p300 Core} co-transfected with four *IL1RN*-targeted gRNAs and normalized to dCas9 co-transfected with four *IL1RN* gRNAs is indicated for each ChIP qPCR locus assayed. 5ng of ChIP-prepared DNA was used for each reaction (n = 3 independent experiments, error bars: s.e.m.).

[00136] In contrast to these increases in H3K27ac at the target sites by both dCas9^{VP64} or dCas9^{p300 Core}, robust enrichment in H3K27ac at the HS2-regulated *HBE* and *HBG* promoters was observed only with dCas9^{p300 Core} treatment (FIG. 4C-D). Together these results demonstrate

that dCas9^{p300 Core} uniquely catalyzes H3K27ac enrichment at gRNA-targeted loci and at enhancer-targeted distal promoters. Therefore the acetylation established by dCas9^{p300 Core} at HS2 may catalyze enhancer activity in a manner distinct from direct recruitment of preinitiation complex components by dCas9^{VP64}, as indicated by the distal activation of the *HBE*, *HBG*, and *HBD* genes from the HS2 enhancer by dCas9^{p300 Core} but not by dCas9^{VP64} (FIG. 2C, FIGS. 9A-9E).

EXAMPLE 6

dCas9^{p300 Core} activates genes with a single gRNA

[00137] Robust transactivation using dCas9-effector fusion proteins currently relies upon the application of multiple gRNAs, multiple effector domains, or both. Transcriptional activation could be simplified with the use of single gRNAs in tandem with a single dCas9-effector fusion. This would also facilitate multiplexing distinct target genes and the incorporation of additional functionalities into the system. The transactivation potential of dCas9^{p300 Core} with single gRNAs was compared to that of dCas9^{p300 core} with four pooled gRNAs targeting the *ILIRN*, *MYOD* and *OCT4* promoters (FIGS. 5A-5B). Substantial activation was observed upon co-transfection of the dCas9^{p300 Core} and a single gRNA at each promoter tested. For the *ILIRN* and *MYOD* promoters, there was no significant difference between the pooled gRNAs and the best individual gRNA (FIGS. 5A-5B; *ILIRN* gRNA “C”, *P*-value 0.78; *MYOD* gRNA “D”, *P*-value 0.26). Although activation of the *OCT4* promoter produced additive effects when four gRNAs were pooled with dCas9^{p300 Core}, the most potent single gRNA (gRNA “D”) induced a statistically comparable amount of gene expression to that observed upon co-transfection of dCas9^{VP64} with an equimolar pool of all four promoter gRNAs (*P*-value 0.73; FIG. 5C). Compared to dCas9^{p300 Core}, levels of gene activation with dCas9^{VP64} and single gRNAs were substantially lower. Also, in contrast to dCas9^{p300 Core}, dCas9^{VP64} demonstrated synergistic effects with combinations of gRNAs in every case (FIGS. 5A-5C).

[00138] Based on the transactivation ability of dCas9^{p300 Core} at enhancer regions and with single gRNAs at promoter regions, it was hypothesized that dCas9^{p300 Core} might also be able to transactivate enhancers via a single targeted gRNA. The *MYOD* (DRR and CE), *OCT4* (PE and DE), and HS2 enhancer regions were tested with equimolar concentrations of pools or single gRNAs (FIGS. 5D-5G). For both *MYOD* enhancer regions, co-transfection of dCas9^{p300 Core} and a

single enhancer-targeting gRNA was sufficient to activate gene expression to levels similar to cells co-transfected with dCas9^{p300 Core} and the four pooled enhancer gRNAs (FIG. 5D). Similarly, *OCT4* gene expression was activated from the PE via dCas9^{p300 Core} localization with a single gRNA to similar levels as dCas9^{p300 Core} localized with a pool of six PE-targeted gRNAs (FIG. 5E). dCas9^{p300 Core}-mediated induction of *OCT4* from the DE (FIG. 5E) and *HBE* and *HBG* genes from the HS2 enhancer (FIGS. 5F-5G) showed increased expression with the pooled gRNAs relative to single gRNAs. Nevertheless, there was activation of target gene expression above control for several single gRNAs at these enhancers (FIGS. 5E-5G).

EXAMPLE 7

The p300 HAT domain is portable to other DNA-binding proteins

[00139] The dCas9/gRNA system from *Streptococcus pyogenes* has been widely adopted due to its robust, versatile, and easily programmable properties. However, several other programmable DNA-binding proteins are also under development for various applications and may be preferable for particular applications, including orthogonal dCas9 systems from other species, TALEs, and zinc finger proteins. To determine if the p300 Core HAT domain was portable to these other systems, fusions were created to dCas9 from *Neisseria meningitidis* (*Nm*-dCas9), four different TALEs targeting the *IL1RN* promoter, and a zinc finger protein targeting *ICAM1* (FIG. 6). Co-transfection of *Nm*-dCas9^{p300 Core} and five *Nm*-gRNAs targeted to the *HBE* or the *HBG* promoters led to significant gene induction compared to mock-transfected controls (*P*-value 0.038 and 0.0141 for *HBE* and *HBG* respectively) (FIGS. 6B-6C). When co-transfected with five *Nm*-gRNAs targeted to the HS2 enhancer, *Nm*-dCas9^{p300 Core} also significantly activated the distal *HBE* and *HBG*, globin genes compared to mock-transfected controls (*p*= 0.0192 and *p*=0.0393, respectively)(FIGS. 6D-6E). Similar to dCas9^{p300 Core}, *Nm*-dCas9^{p300 Core} activated gene expression from promoters and the HS2 enhancer via a single gRNA. *Nm*-dCas9^{VP64} displayed negligible capacity to transactivate *HBE* or *HBG* regardless of localization to promoter regions or to the HS2 enhancer either with single or multiple gRNAs (FIGS. 6B-6E). Transfection of the expression plasmids for a combination of four TALE^{p300 Core} fusion proteins targeted to the *IL1RN* promoter (*IL1RN* TALE^{p300 Core}) also activated downstream gene expression, although to a lesser extent than four corresponding TALE^{VP64} fusions (*IL1RN* TALE^{VP64}) (FIGS. 6F-6G). However, single p300 Core effectors were much more potent than

single VP64 domains when fused to *ILIRN* TALEs. Interestingly, dCas9^{p300 Core} directed to any single binding site generated comparable *ILIRN* expression relative to single or pooled *ILIRN* TALE effectors and direct comparisons suggest that dCas9 may be a more robust activator than TALEs when fused to the larger p300 Core fusion domain (FIGS. 11A-11C). The p300 Core effector domain did not display synergy with either additional gRNAs or TALEs (see FIGS. 5, 6, 9, and 11) or in combination with VP64 (see FIGS. 13A-13B). The underlying chromatin context of the dCas9p300 Core target loci is shown in FIGS. 14A-14E.

[00140] The ZF^{p300 Core} fusion targeted to the *ICAM1* promoter (*ICAM1* ZF^{p300 Core}) also activated its target gene relative to control and at a similar level as ZF^{VP64} (*ICAM1* ZF^{VP64}) (FIGS. 6H-6I). The versatility of the p300 Core fusion with multiple targeting domains is evidence that this is a robust approach for targeted acetylation and gene regulation. The various p300 core fusion proteins were expressed well, as determined by western blot (FIGS. 12A-12B), but differences in p300 Core activity between different fusion proteins could be attributable to binding affinity or protein folding.

EXAMPLE 8

Myocardin

[00141] 36 gRNAs were designed to span -2000 bp to +250 bp (coordinates relative to TSS) region of the *MYOCD* gene (Table 7).

Table 7

Myocd gRNAs Information									
Target Name	gRNA Name	Protospacer (N20)	SEQ ID NO	PAM	SEQ ID NO	+/-	Length	Coordinates Relative to TSS	
Myocd	Cr1	cctggtcttcaatgagaaga	152	NGG	188	-	20	-1991	-1971
Myocd	Cr2	gattaggacatgaacatggg	153	NGG	189	-	20	-1897	-1877
Myocd	Cr3	cctcttctacattaacctta	154	NGG	190	-	20	-1771	-1751
Myocd	Cr4	ttttgaagccagcaatcgt	155	NGG	191	-	20	-1693	-1673
Myocd	Cr5	cgtagtttctggaggtct	156	NGG	192	-	20	-1597	-1577
Myocd	Cr6	acaaattaccacgaatgtag	157	NGG	193	-	20	-1480	-1460
Myocd	Cr7	tggcctgggcgcctgtctat	158	NGG	194	-	20	-1395	-1375
Myocd	Cr8	attttgtaaataaggtcttc	159	NGG	195	-	20	-1297	-1277
Myocd	Cr9	agcaacaggggatggggcag	160	NGG	196	+	20	-1221	-1201
Myocd	Cr10	aggactcgtagtatgcaggc	161	NGG	197	+	20	-1120	-1100
Myocd	Cr11	ctgagccaccaactatttaa	162	NGG	198	+	20	-1005	-985

Myocd	Cr12	ctgagccaccaactatttaa	163	NGG	199	+	20	-945	-925
Myocd	Cr13	actctgggtcggttacggaa	164	NGG	200	+	20	-907	-887
Myocd	Cr14	gggctgggcttagcttggga	165	NGG	201	-	20	-837	-817
Myocd	Cr15	atagggaggggctctggagc	166	NGG	202	-	20	-798	-778
Myocd	Cr16	atgggaaaagatacctgagt	167	NGG	203	-	20	-751	-731
Myocd	Cr17	tgggagcggttggtcgcagc	168	NGG	204	+	20	-713	-693
Myocd	Cr18	tggaaaggctttcattttct	169	NGG	205	-	20	-642	-622
Myocd	Cr19	gtatctcgcagctccaatac	170	NGG	206	-	20	-594	-574
Myocd	Cr20	acgcattcccctcggtttga	171	NGG	207	-	20	-544	-524
Myocd	Cr21	tcggaagcttttctctcag	172	NGG	208	+	20	-511	-491
Myocd	Cr22	cgaaagggcggtgcgcgcccg	173	NGG	209	-	20	-449	-429
Myocd	Cr23	ccggcgaaagggaagcgccc	174	NGG	210	-	20	-396	-376
Myocd	Cr24	ggctgcgcacgccatcccc	175	NGG	211	+	20	-352	-332
Myocd	Cr25	ggggcttcaggtggttcgc	176	NGG	212	-	20	-297	-277
Myocd	Cr26	cgagctaaagagcggatgcc	177	NGG	213	-	20	-246	-226
Myocd	Cr27	agagggcgaggagcagggcca	178	NGG	214	-	20	-200	-180
Myocd	Cr28	aaccggctcttaactcttg	179	NGG	215	-	20	-153	-133
Myocd	Cr29	caggagcggcgagcgggggtc	180	NGG	216	-	20	-101	-81
Myocd	Cr30	gggtatcagatggcaaagtt	181	NGG	217	+	20	-54	-34
Myocd	Cr31	tcataggctgccggcgattg	182	NGG	218	-	20	0	20
Myocd	Cr32	gaggttgccaggagcagcg	183	NGG	219	-	20	47	67
Myocd	Cr33	aattagccccgcacggcgag	184	NGG	220	+	20	100	120
Myocd	Cr34	tcccctgggtaggagtacag	185	NGG	221	-	20	157	177
Myocd	Cr35	ggttgtagctgcggtcagc	186	NGG	222	+	20	203	223
Myocd	Cr36	ggtggagaacagggggcgcc	187	NGG	223	+	20	246	266

[00142] The gRNAs were cloned into a spCas9 gRNA expression vector containing hU6 promoter and BbsI restriction site. The gRNAs were transiently co-transfected with dCas9^{p300 Core} into HEK293T cells. The resulting mRNA production for myocardin was assayed in samples harvested three days post-transfection (FIG. 17). Combinations of Cr32, Cr13, Cr30, Cr28, Cr31, and Cr34 were analyzed with dCas9^{p300 Core} (Table 8; FIG. 18).

Table 8

Condition	Cr32	Cr13	Cr30	Cr28	Cr31	Cr34
1	X	X	X	X	X	X
2	X	X	X	X		
3	X	X	X		X	
4	X	X	X			X
5	X	X		X	X	
6	X	X			X	X
7	X	X		X		X

8	X		X	X	X	
9		X	X	X		X
10		X		X	X	X
11		X	X	X	X	X
12	X		X	X	X	X
13	X	X		X	X	X
14	X	X	X		X	X
15	X	X	X	X		X
16	X	X	X	X	X	

EXAMPLE 9*Pax7*

[00143] gRNAs were designed to span the region surrounding the *PAX7* gene (Table 9). The gRNAs were cloned into a spCas9 gRNA expression vector containing hU6 promoter and BbsI restriction site. The gRNAs were transiently co-transfected with dCas9^{p300 Core} or dCas9^{VP64} into HEK293T cells. The resulting mRNA production for Pax7 was assayed in samples harvested three days post-transfection (FIG. 19). The gRNA19 (“g19”) was used in further experiments and shown to localize to a DNase hypersensitive site (DHS) (FIG. 20).

Table 9

Pax7 gRNAs				
TSS Target position	Strand	Target name	Oligo in sense strand	SEQ ID NO
138	AS	JK12	GGGGGCGCGAGTGATCAGCT	224
27	S	JK16	CCCGGGTCTCCTAGGGGACG	225
+95	S	JK17	TGGTCCGGAGAAAGAAGGCG	226
+187	S	JK18	GTCTCCGGGCTCGGAAACTT	227
+223	S	JK19	AGCGCCAGAGCGCGAGAGCG	228
+273	S	JK20	CGATTCCGGCCGCGTTCCCC	229
+335	AS	JK21	GTTGTGCGGGCTGATGCGCC	230

EXAMPLE 10*FGF1*

[00144] gRNAs were designed for the *FGF1A*, *FGF1B*, and *FGF1C* genes (Tables 10 and 11). The 25 nM of gRNAs were transiently co-transfected with dCas9^{p300 Core} or dCas9^{VP64} into HEK293T cells. The resulting mRNA production for FGF1 expression was determined (FIGS.

21-23). In FIG. 23, the number of stable cell-lines transfected with the lentivirus vector was 2, except for FGF1A where n=1.

Table 10

gRNA	Gene	Type	Name
1	FGF1A	F_7sk	1FGF1AF_7sk
2	FGF1A	F_h1	2FGF1AF_h1
3	FGF1A	F_hU6	3FGF1AF_hU6
4	FGF1A	F_mU6	4FGF1AF_mU6
1	FGF1A	R_7sk	1FGF1AR_7sk
2	FGF1A	R_h1	2FGF1AR_h1
3	FGF1A	R_hU6	3FGF1AR_hU6
4	FGF1A	R_mU6	4FGF1AR_mU6
1	FGF1B	F_7sk	1FGF1BF_7sk
2	FGF1B	F_h1	2FGF1BF_h1
3	FGF1B	F_hU6	3FGF1BF_hU6
4	FGF1B	F_mU6	4FGF1BF_mU6
1	FGF1B	R_7sk	1FGF1BR_7sk
2	FGF1B	R_h1	2FGF1BR_h1
3	FGF1B	R_hU6	3FGF1BR_hU6
4	FGF1B	R_mU6	4FGF1BR_mU6
1	FGF1C	F_7sk	1FGF1CF_7sk
2	FGF1C	F_h1	2FGF1CF_h1
3	FGF1C	F_hU6	3FGF1CF_hU6
4	FGF1C	F_mU6	4FGF1CF_mU6
1	FGF1C	R_7sk	1FGF1CR_7sk
2	FGF1C	R_h1	2FGF1CR_h1
3	FGF1C	R_hU6	3FGF1CR_hU6
4	FGF1C	R_mU6	4FGF1CR_mU6

Table 11

FGF1 gRNAs Information						
gRNA	Final Sequence	SEQ ID NO	1st addition	Sequence	SEQ ID NO	2nd addition
1	CCTCGTGTGTTCTGGGCCTGCTGC	231	CCTCG	TGTGTTCTGGGCCTGCTGC	255	
2	TCCATAAACAGGATTC TGCTCAGA	232	TCCCA	TAAACAGGATTCTGCTCAGA	256	
3	CACCGGCCAGATGACAG AACAGAAA	233	CACCG	GCCAGATGACAGAACAGAAA	257	

4	TTGTTTGAAAATGCCATT TGTAGGGCT	234	TTGTTTG	AAAATGCCATTTGTA GGGCT	258	
1	AAACGCAGCAGGCCAG GAACACAC	235	AAAC	GCAGCAGGCCAGGA ACACA	259	C
2	AAACTCTGAGCAGAATC CTGTTTAT	236	AAAC	TCTGAGCAGAATCCT GTTTA	260	T
3	AAACTTTCTGTTCTGTCA TCTGGCC	237	AAAC	TTTCTGTTCTGTCATC TGGC	261	C
4	AAACAGCCCTACAAATG GCATTTTCAA	238	AAAC	AGCCCTACAAATGGC ATTTT	262	CAA
1	CCTCGtctgtcttctgccgaacctca	239	CCTCG	tctgtcttctgccgaacctca	263	
2	TCCCAcctaaagagctttaggccg	240	TCCCA	cctaaagagctttaggccg	264	
3	CACCGagagctggctaccgctcct	241	CACCG	agagctggctaccgctcct	265	
4	TTGTTTGcgggtccttgtttatcagta g	242	TTGTTTG	cgggtccttgtttatcagtag	266	
1	AAACtgagggttcggcagaagcaga C	243	AAAC	tgagggttcggcagaagcaga	267	C
2	AAACcgggcctacaagctcttaggT	244	AAAC	cgggcctacaagctcttagg	268	T
3	AAACagggacgggtagccagctct C	245	AAAC	agggacgggtagccagctct	269	C
4	AAACctactgataaacaaggaccgC AA	246	AAAC	ctactgataaacaaggaccg	270	CAA
1	CCTCGGAGCTGGCTACC CGTCCCTA	247	CCTCG	GAGCTGGCTACCCGT CCCTA	271	
2	TCCCACTTTGGCTGGGTT TAAACCA	248	TCCCA	CTTTGGCTGGGTTTAA ACCA	272	
3	CACCGGTCAGCTCAGGG TTTTGGTA	249	CACCG	GTCAGCTCAGGGTTTT GGTA	273	
4	TTGTTTGGAGTTAGCTCC CCGACCCAG	250	TTGTTTG	GAGTTAGCTCCCCGA CCCAG	274	
1	AAACTAGGGACGGGTAG CCAGCTCC	251	AAAC	TAGGGACGGGTAGCC AGCTC	275	C
2	AAACTGGTTTAAACCCA GCCAAAGT	252	AAAC	TGGTTTAAACCCAGCC AAAG	276	T
3	AAACTACCAAAACCCTG AGCTGACC	253	AAAC	TACCAAAACCCTGAG CTGAC	277	C
4	AAACCTGGGTCGGGGAG CTAACTCCAA	254	AAAC	CTGGGTCGGGGAGCT AACTC	278	CAA

[00145] It is understood that the foregoing detailed description and accompanying examples are merely illustrative and are not to be taken as limitations upon the scope of the invention, which is defined solely by the appended claims and their equivalents.

[00146] Various changes and modifications to the disclosed embodiments will be apparent to those skilled in the art. Such changes and modifications, including without limitation those relating to the chemical structures, substituents, derivatives, intermediates, syntheses,

compositions, formulations, or methods of use of the invention, may be made without departing from the spirit and scope thereof.

[00147] For reasons of completeness, various aspects of the invention are set out in the following numbered clauses:

[00148] Clause 1. A fusion protein comprising two heterologous polypeptide domains, wherein the first polypeptide domain comprises a Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats associated (Cas) protein and the second polypeptide domain comprises a peptide having histone acetyltransferase activity.

[00149] Clause 2. The fusion protein of clause 1, wherein the fusion protein activates transcription of a target gene.

[00150] Clause 3. The fusion protein of clause 1 or 2, wherein the Cas protein comprises Cas9.

[00151] Clause 4. The fusion protein of clause 3, wherein the Cas9 comprises at least one amino acid mutation which knocks out nuclease activity of Cas9.

[00152] Clause 5. The fusion protein of clause 4, wherein the Cas protein comprises SEQ ID NO: 1 or SEQ ID NO: 10.

[00153] Clause 6. The fusion protein of any one of clauses 1-5, wherein the second polypeptide domain comprises a histone acetyltransferase effector domain.

[00154] Clause 7. The fusion protein of clause 6, wherein the histone acetyltransferase effector domain is a p300 histone acetyltransferase effector domain.

[00155] Clause 8. The fusion protein of any one of clauses 1-7, wherein the second polypeptide domain comprises SEQ ID NO: 2 or SEQ ID NO: 3.

[00156] Clause 9. The fusion protein of any one of clauses 1-8, wherein the first polypeptide domain comprises SEQ ID NO: 1 or SEQ ID NO: 10 and the second polypeptide domain comprises SEQ ID NO: 2 or SEQ ID NO: 3.

[00157] Clause 10. The fusion protein of any one of clauses 1-9, wherein the first polypeptide domain comprises SEQ ID NO: 1 and the second polypeptide domain comprises SEQ ID NO: 3, or the first polypeptide domain comprises SEQ ID NO: 10 and the second polypeptide domain comprises SEQ ID NO: 3.

[00158] Clause 11. The fusion protein of any one of clauses 1-10, further comprising a linker connecting the first polypeptide domain to the second polypeptide domain.

[00159] Clause 12. The fusion protein of any one of clauses 1-11, wherein the fusion protein comprises an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 140, 141, or 149.

[00160] Clause 13. A DNA targeting system comprising the fusion protein of any one of clauses 1-12 and at least one guide RNA (gRNA).

[00161] Clause 14. The DNA targeting system of clause 13, wherein the at least one gRNA comprises a 12-22 base pair complementary polynucleotide sequence of the target DNA sequence followed by a protospacer-adjacent motif.

[00162] Clause 15. The DNA targeting system of clause 13 or 14, wherein the at least one gRNA targets a target region, the target region comprises a target enhancer, target regulatory element, a cis-regulatory region of a target gene, or a trans-regulatory region of a target gene.

[00163] Clause 16. The DNA targeting system of clause 15, wherein the target region is a distal or proximal cis-regulatory region of the target gene.

[00164] Clause 17. The DNA targeting system of clause 15 or 16, wherein the target region is an enhancer region or a promoter region of the target gene.

[00165] Clause 18. The DNA targeting system of any one of clauses 15- 17, wherein the target gene is an endogenous gene or a transgene.

[00166] Clause 19. The DNA targeting system of clause 15, wherein the target region comprises a target enhancer or a target regulatory element.

[00167] Clause 20. The DNA targeting system of clause 19, wherein the target enhancer or target regulatory element control the gene expression of more than one target gene.

[00168] Clause 21. The DNA targeting system of any one of clauses 15-20, wherein the DNA targeting system comprises between one and ten different gRNAs.

[00169] Clause 22. The DNA targeting system of any one of clauses 15-21, wherein the DNA targeting system comprises one gRNA.

[00170] Clause 23. The DNA targeting system of any one of clauses 15-22, wherein the target region is located on the same chromosome as the target gene.

[00171] Clause 24. The DNA targeting system of clause 23, wherein the target region is located about 1 base pair to about 100,000 base pairs upstream of a transcription start site of the target gene.

[00172] Clause 25. The DNA targeting system of clause 24, wherein the target region is located about 1000 base pairs to about 50,000 base pairs upstream of the transcription start site of the target gene.

[00173] Clause 26. The DNA targeting system of any one of clauses 15-22, wherein the target region is located on a different chromosome as the target gene.

[00174] Clause 27. The DNA targeting system of any one of clauses 15-28, wherein the different gRNAs bind to different target regions.

[00175] Clause 28. The DNA targeting system of clause 27, wherein the different gRNAs bind to target regions of different target genes.

[00176] Clause 29. The DNA targeting system of clause 27, wherein the expression of two or more target genes are activated.

[00177] Clause 30. The DNA targeting system of any one of clauses 15-29, wherein the target gene is selected from the group consisting of IL1RN, MYOD1, OCT4, HBE, HBG, HBD, HBB, MYOCD, PAX7, FGF1A, FGF1B, and FGF1C.

[00178] Clause 31. The DNA targeting system of clause 30, wherein the target region is at least one of HS2 enhancer of the human β -globin locus, distal regulatory region (DRR) of the MYOD gene, core enhancer (CE) of the MYOD gene, proximal (PE) enhancer region of the OCT4 gene, or distal (DE) enhancer region of the OCT4 gene.

[00179] Clause 32. The DNA targeting system of any one of clauses 13-31, wherein the gRNA comprises at least one of SEQ ID NOs: 23-73, 188-223, or 224-254.

[00180] Clause 33. An isolated polynucleotide encoding the fusion protein of any one of clauses 1-12 or the DNA targeting system of any one of clauses 13-32.

[00181] Clause 34. A vector comprising the isolated polynucleotide of clause 33.

[00182] Clause 35. A cell comprising the isolated polynucleotide of clause 33 or the vector of clause 34.

[00183] Clause 36. A kit comprising the fusion protein of any one of clauses 1-12, the DNA targeting system of clauses 13-32, the isolated polynucleotide of clause 33, the vector of clause 34, or the cell of clause 35.

[00184] Clause 37. A method of activating gene expression of a target gene in a cell, the method comprising contacting the cell with the fusion protein of any one of clauses 1-12, the

DNA targeting system of clauses 13-32, the isolated polynucleotide of clause 33, or the vector of clause 34.

[00185] Clause 38. A method of activating gene expression of a target gene in a cell, the method comprising contacting the cell with a polynucleotide encoding a DNA targeting system, wherein the DNA targeting system comprises the fusion protein of any one of clauses 1-12 and at least one guide RNA (gRNA).

[00186] Clause 39. The method of clause 38, wherein the at least one gRNA comprises a 12-22 base pair complementary polynucleotide sequence of the target DNA sequence followed by a protospacer-adjacent motif.

[00187] Clause 40. The method of clause 38 or 39, wherein the at least one gRNA targets a target region, the target region is a cis-regulatory region or a trans-regulatory region of a target gene.

[00188] Clause 41. The method of clause 40, wherein the target region is a distal or proximal cis-regulatory region of the target gene.

[00189] Clause 42. The method of clause 40 or 41, wherein the target region is an enhancer region or a promoter region of the target gene.

[00190] Clause 43. The method of clause 40-42, wherein the target gene is an endogenous gene or a transgene.

[00191] Clause 44. The method of clause 43, wherein the DNA targeting system comprises between one and ten different gRNAs.

[00192] Clause 45. The method of clause 43, wherein the DNA targeting system comprises one gRNA.

[00193] Clause 46. The method of clause 40-45, wherein the target region is located on the same chromosome as the target gene.

[00194] Clause 47. The method of clause 46, wherein the target region is located about 1 base pair to about 100,000 base pairs upstream of a transcription start site of the target gene.

[00195] Clause 48. The method of clause 46, wherein the target region is located about 1000 base pairs to about 50,000 base pairs upstream of the transcription start site of the target gene.

[00196] Clause 49. The method of clause 40-45, wherein the target region is located on a different chromosome as the target gene.

[00197] Clause 50. The method of clause 40-45, wherein the different gRNAs bind to different target regions.

[00198] Clause 51. The method of clause 50, wherein the different gRNAs bind to target regions of different target genes.

[00199] Clause 52. The method of clause 51, wherein the expression of two or more target genes are activated.

[00200] Clause 53. The method of clause 40-52, wherein the target gene is selected from the group consisting of IL1RN, MYOD1, OCT4, HBE, HBG, HBD, HBB, MYOCD, PAX7, FGF1A, FGF1B, and FGF1C.

[00201] Clause 54. The method of clause 53, wherein the target region is at least one of HS2 enhancer of the human β -globin locus, distal regulatory region (DRR) of the MYOD gene, core enhancer (CE) of the MYOD gene, proximal (PE) enhancer region of the OCT4 gene, or distal (DE) enhancer region of the OCT4 gene.

[00202] Clause 55. The method of clause 37-54, wherein the gRNA comprises at least one of SEQ ID NOs: 23-73, 188-223, or 224-254.

[00203] Clause 56. The method of any one of clauses 37-55, wherein the DNA targeting system is delivered to the cell virally or non-virally.

[00204] Clause 57. The method of any one of clauses 37-56, wherein the cell is a mammalian cell.

Appendix – Sequences

Streptococcus pyogenes Cas 9 (with D10A, H849A) (SEQ ID NO: 1)

MDKKYSIGLAIGTNSVGWAVITDEYKVPSKKFKVLGNTDRHSIKKNLIGALLFDSGETA
 EATRLKRTARRRYTRRKNRICYLQEIFSNEMAKVDDSFHRLEESFLVEEDKKHERHPIF
 GNIVDEVAYHEKYPTIYHLRKKLVDSTDKADLRILIYLAHMIKFRGHFLIEGDLNPDNS
 DVDKLFQILVQTYNQLFEENPINASGVDAKAILSARLSKSRLENLIAQLPGEKKNGLFG
 NLIALSLGLTPNFKSNFDLAEDAKLQLSKDTYDDDLDNLLAQIGDQYADLFLAAKNLSD
 AILLSDILRVNTEITKAPLSASMIKRYDEHHQDLTLLKALVRQQLEPKYKEIFFDQSKNGY
 AGYIDGGASQEEFYKFIPLEKMDGTEELLVKLNREDLLRKQRTFDNGSIPHQIHLGEL
 HAILRRQEDFYFPLKDNREKIEKILTFRIPYYVGPLARGNSRF AWMTRKSEETITPWNFEE
 VVDKGASAQSFIERMTNFDKNLPNEKVLPHSLLEYFTVYNELTKVKYVTEGMRKPA
 FLSGEQKKAIVDLLFKTNRKVTVKQLKEDYFKKIECFDSVEISGVEDRFNASLGTYHDLL
 KIIKDKDFLDNEENEDILEDIVLTLTLFEDREMIEERLKTYAHLFDDKVMKQLKRRRYTG
 WGRLSRKLINGIRDKQSGKTILDFLKSDGFANRNFMLIHDDSLTFKEDIQKAQVSGQG
 DSLHEHIANLAGSPAIIKKGILQTVKVDELVKVMGRHKPENIVIEMARENQTTQKGQKN
 SRERMKRIEEGKELGSQILKEHPVENTQLQNEKLYLYLQNGRDMYVDQELDINRLSD
 YDVD AIVPQSFLKDDSIDNKVLTRSDKNRGKSDNVPSEEVKKMKNYWRQLLNAKLIT
 QRKFDNLTKAERGGLSELDKAGFIKRQLVETRQITKHVAQILDSRMNTKYDENDKLIRE
 VKVITLKS KLVSDFRKDFQFYKVREINNYHHAHDAYLNAVVGTA LIKKYPKLESEFVYG
 DYKVYDVRKMIAKSEQEIGKATAKYFFYSNIMNFFKTEITLANGEIRKRPLIETNGETGEI
 VWDKGRDFATVRKVL SMPQVNIVKKTEVQTGGFSKESILPKRNSDKLIARKKDWDPKK
 YGGFDSPTVAYSVLVVAKVEKGKSKKLKSVKELLGITIMERSSEKPNIDFLEAKGYKE
 VKKDLIIKLPKYSLFELENGRKRMLASAGELQKGNELALPSKYVNFLYLASHYEKLKGS
 PEDNEQKQLFVEQHKHYLDEIIEQISEFSKRVILADANLDKVLSAYNKHRDKPIREQAENI
 IHLFTLTNLGAPAAFKYFDTTIDRKRYTSTKEVL DATLIHQ SITGLYETRIDLSQLGGD

Human p300 (with L553M mutation) (SEQ ID NO: 2)

MAENVVEPGPPSAKRPKLSSPAL SASASDGTDFGSLFDLEHDL PDELINSTE LGLTNGGDI
 NQLQTS LGMVQDAASKHKQLSELLRSGSSPNLNMGVGGPGQVMASQAQQSSPGLGLIN
 SMVKSPMTQAGLTSPNMGMGTSGPNQGPQTQSTGMMNSPVNQ PAMGMNTGMNAGMN
 PGMLAAGNGQGIMPNQVMNGSIGAGRGRQNMQYPNPGMGSAGNLLTEPLQQGSPQM
 GGQTGLRGPQPLKMGMNNPNPYGSPYTQNPQQIGASGLGLQIQTKTVLSNNLSPFA
 MDKKAVPGGGMPNMGQQPAPQVQQPGLVTPVAQGMGSGAHTADPEKRKLIQQQLVL
 LLHAHKCQRREQANGEVRQCNLPHCRTMKNVLN HMT HCQSGKSCQVAHCASSRQIISH
 WKNCTRHD CPVCLPLKNAGDKRNQQPILTGAPVGLGNPSSLGVGQQSAPNLSTVSQIDP
 SSIERAYAALGLPYQVNQMPTQPQVQAKNQNNQQPGQSPQGM RPSNMSASPMGVNG
 GVGVTPTSLSDSMLHSAIN SQNPMSENASVPSMGMPTAAQPSTTGIRKQWHEDITQ
 DLNRHLVHKL VQAIFPTPDPAALKDRRMENLVAYARKVEGDMYESANNRAEYYHLLA
 EKIYKIQKELEEKRRTRLQKQNMLPNAAGMVPVSMNPGPNMGQPQPGMTSNGPLPDPS
 MIRGSVPNQMMPRITPQSGLNQFGQMSMAQPPIVPRQTPPLQHHGQLAQPGALNPPMG
 YGPRMQQPSNQQGFLPQTQFPSQGMNVTNIPLAPSSGQAPVSQAQMSSSSCPVNSPIMPP
 GSQGSIIHCPQLPQPALHQNSPSPVPSRTPTPHHTPPSIGAQQPPATTIPAPVPTPPAMPPG
 PQSQALHPPPRQTPPTTQLPQQVQPSLPAAPSADQPPQQPRSQQSTAASVPTPTAPLLP

PQPATPLSQPAVSIEGQVSNPPSTSSTEVENSAIAEKQPSQEVKMEAKMEVDQPEPADTQ
 PEDISESKVEDCKMESTETEERSTELKTEIKEEEDQPSTSATQSSPAPGQSKKKIFKPEELR
QALMPTLEALYRQDPESLPFRQPVDPQLLGIPDYFDIVKSPMDLSTIKRKLDTGQYQEPW
QYVDDIWLMFNNAWL YNRKTSRVYKYCSKLSEVFEQEIDPVMQSLGYCCGRKLEFSPO
TLCCYGKQLCTIPRDATYYSYQNR YHFCEKCFNEIQGESVSLGDDPSQPQTTINKEQFSK
RKNDTLDPELFVECTECGRKMHQICVLHHEIWPAGFVCDGCLKKSARTRKENKFSKR
LPSTRLGTFLN RVNDFLRRQNHPESEGEVTVRVVHASDKTVEVKPGMKARFVDSGEMA
ESFPYRTKALFAFEEIDGVDL CFFGMHVQEYGSDCPPPNQRRVYISYLD SVHFFRPKCLR
TAVYHEILIGYLEYVKKLGYTTGHIWACPPSEGDDYIFHCHPPDQKIPKPKRLQEWYKK
MLDKAVSERIVHDYKDIFKQATEDRLTSAKELPYFEGDFWPNVLEESIKELEQEEERKR
EENTSNESTDVTKGDSKNAKKKNNKKT SKNKSSL SRGNKKKPGMPNVSN DL SOKLYAT
MEKHKEVFFVIRLIAGPAANSLPPIVDPDPLIPCDLMDGRDAFLTLARDKHLEFSSLRA
QWSTMCMMLVELHTQSQDRFVYTCNECKHHVETRWHCTVCEDYDL CITCYNTKNH DHK
 MEKLGGLDDESNNQAAATQSPGDSRRLSIQRCIQLVHACQCRNANCSLPSCQKMK
 RVVQHTKGCKRK TNGGCPICKQLIALCCYHAKHCQENKCPVPFCLNIKQKLRQQQLQH
 RLQQAQMLRRRMASMQRTGVVGGQQQLPSPTPATPTTPTGQQPTTPQTPQPTSQPQPTP
 PNSMPYPYLPRTQAAGPVSQGAAGQVTPPTPPQTAQPPLPGPPAAVEMAMQIQRAAET
 QRQMAHVQIFQRPIQHQMPPMTMPMAPMGMNPPPMTRGPSGHLEPGMGPTGMQQQPPW
 SQGGLPQPQQLQSGMPRPAMMSVAQHGGQPLNMAPQPGLGQVGISPLKPGTVSQQALQ
 NLLRTLRSPPSPLQQQQLSILHANPQLLAFAIKQRAAKYANSNPQPIPGQPGMPQGQPG
 LQPPTMPGQQGVHSNPAMQNMNPMQAGVQRAGLPQQQPQQQLQPPMGGMSPQAQQ
 MNMNHNTMPSQFRDILRRQQMMQQQQQQGAGPGIGPGMANHNQFQQPQGVGYPPQQ
 QQRMQHMMQMQMQGNMGQIGQLPQALGAEAGASLQAYQQRLLQQQMGSPVQPNPM
 SPQQHMLPNQAQSPHLQGGQIPNSLSNQVRSPQVPSPRPQSQPPHSSPSPRMQPQSPH
 HVSPQTSSPHPGLVAAQANPMEQGHFASPDQNSMLSQLASNPGMANLHGASATDLGLS
 TDNSDLNSNLSQSSTLDIH

p300 Core Effector (aa 1048-1664 of SEQ ID NO: 2) (SEQ ID NO: 3)

IFKPEELRQALMPTLEALYRQDPESLPFRQPVDPQLLGIPDYFDIVKSPMDLSTIKRKLDT
 GQYQEPWQYVDDIWLMFNNAWL YNRKTSRVYKYCSKLSEVFEQEIDPVMQSLGYCCG
 RKLEFSQTLCCYGKQLCTIPRDATYYSYQNR YHFCEKCFNEIQGESVSLGDDPSQPQTT
 INKEQFSKRKNDTLDPELFVECTECGRKMHQICVLHHEIWPAGFVCDGCLKKSARTRK
 ENKFSAKRLPSTRLGTFLN RVNDFLRRQNHPESEGEVTVRVVHASDKTVEVKPGMKAR
 FVDSGEMAESFPYRTKALFAFEEIDGVDL CFFGMHVQEYGSDCPPPNQRRVYISYLD SV
 HFFRPKCLRTAVYHEILIGYLEYVKKLGYTTGHIWACPPSEGDDYIFHCHPPDQKIPKPK
 RLQEWYKKMLDKAVSERIVHDYKDIFKQATEDRLTSAKELPYFEGDFWPNVLEESIKEL
 EQEEERKREENTSNESTDVTKGDSKNAKKKNNKKT SKNKSSL SRGNKKKPGMPNVSN
 DLSOKLYATMEKHKEVFFVIRLIAGPAANSLPPIVDPDPLIPCDLMDGRDAFLTLARDKH
 LEFSSLRAQWSTMCMMLVELHTQSQD

p300 Core Effector (aa 1048-1664 of SEQ ID NO: 2 with D1399Y mutation) (SEQ ID NO: 4)

IFKPEELRQALMPTLEALYRQDPESLPFRQPVDPQLLGIPDYFDIVKSPMDLSTIKRKLDT
 GQYQEPWQYVDDIWLMFNNAWL YNRKTSRVYKYCSKLSEVFEQEIDPVMQSLGYCCG
 RKLEFSQTLCCYGKQLCTIPRDATYYSYQNR YHFCEKCFNEIQGESVSLGDDPSQPQTT

INKEQFSKRKNDTLDPELFVECTECGRKMHQICVLHHEIWPAGFVCDGCLKKSARTRK
 ENKFSAKRLPSTRLGTFLNRVNDFLRRQNHPESEGEVTVRVVHASDKTVEVKPGMKAR
 FVDSGEMAESFPYRTKALFAFEEIDGVDLCFFGMHVQEYGSDCPPPNQRRVYISYLSV
 HFFRPKCLRTAVYHEILIGYLEYVKKLGYTTGHIWACPPSEGDDYIFHCHPPDQKIPKPK
 RLQEWYKKMLDKAVSERIVHDYKDIFKQATEDRLTSAKELPYFEGDFWPNVLEESIKEL
 EQEEEEERKREENTSNESTDVTKGDSKNAKKNNKKT SKNKSSL SRGNKKKPGMPNVSN
 DLSQKLYATMEKHKEVFFVIRLIAGPAANSLPPIVDPDPLIPCDLMDGRDAFLTLARDKH
 LEFSSLRRAQWSTMCMMLVELHTQSQD

p300 Core Effector (aa 1048-1664 of SEQ ID NO: 2 with 1645/1646 RR/EE mutations) (SEQ ID NO: 5)

IFKPEELRQALMPTLEALYRQDPESLPFRQPVDPQLLGIPDYFDIVKSPMDLSTIKRKLD
 GQYQEPWQYVDDIWLMFNNAWL YNRKTSRVYKYCSKLSEVFEQEIDPVMQSLGYCCG
 RKLEFSPQTLCCYGGKQLCTIPRDATYYSYQNR YHFCEKCFNEIQGESVSLGDDPSQPQT
 INKEQFSKRKNDTLDPELFVECTECGRKMHQICVLHHEIWPAGFVCDGCLKKSARTRK
 ENKFSAKRLPSTRLGTFLNRVNDFLRRQNHPESEGEVTVRVVHASDKTVEVKPGMKAR
 FVDSGEMAESFPYRTKALFAFEEIDGVDLCFFGMHVQEYGSDCPPPNQRRVYISYLDV
 HFFRPKCLRTAVYHEILIGYLEYVKKLGYTTGHIWACPPSEGDDYIFHCHPPDQKIPKPK
 RLQEWYKKMLDKAVSERIVHDYKDIFKQATEDRLTSAKELPYFEGDFWPNVLEESIKEL
 EQEEEEERKREENTSNESTDVTKGDSKNAKKNNKKT SKNKSSL SRGNKKKPGMPNVSN
 DLSQKLYATMEKHKEVFFVIRLIAGPAANSLPPIVDPDPLIPCDLMDGRDAFLTLARDKH
 LEFSSLEEAQWSTMCMMLVELHTQSQD

p300 Core Effector (aa 1048-1664 of SEQ ID NO: 2 with C1204R mutation) (SEQ ID NO: 6)

IFKPEELRQALMPTLEALYRQDPESLPFRQPVDPQLLGIPDYFDIVKSPMDLSTIKRKLD
 GQYQEPWQYVDDIWLMFNNAWL YNRKTSRVYKYCSKLSEVFEQEIDPVMQSLGYCCG
 RKLEFSPQTLCCYGGKQLCTIPRDATYYSYQNR YHFCEKRFNEIQGESVSLGDDPSQPQT
 INKEQFSKRKNDTLDPELFVECTECGRKMHQICVLHHEIWPAGFVCDGCLKKSARTRK
 ENKFSAKRLPSTRLGTFLNRVNDFLRRQNHPESEGEVTVRVVHASDKTVEVKPGMKAR
 FVDSGEMAESFPYRTKALFAFEEIDGVDLCFFGMHVQEYGSDCPPPNQRRVYISYLDV
 HFFRPKCLRTAVYHEILIGYLEYVKKLGYTTGHIWACPPSEGDDYIFHCHPPDQKIPKPK
 RLQEWYKKMLDKAVSERIVHDYKDIFKQATEDRLTSAKELPYFEGDFWPNVLEESIKEL
 EQEEEEERKREENTSNESTDVTKGDSKNAKKNNKKT SKNKSSL SRGNKKKPGMPNVSN
 DLSQKLYATMEKHKEVFFVIRLIAGPAANSLPPIVDPDPLIPCDLMDGRDAFLTLARDKH
 LEFSSLRRAQWSTMCMMLVELHTQSQD

p300 Core Effector (aa 1048-1664 of SEQ ID NO: 2 with Y1467F mutation) (SEQ ID NO: 7)

IFKPEELRQALMPTLEALYRQDPESLPFRQPVDPQLLGIPDYFDIVKSPMDLSTIKRKLD
 GQYQEPWQYVDDIWLMFNNAWL YNRKTSRVYKYCSKLSEVFEQEIDPVMQSLGYCCG
 RKLEFSPQTLCCYGGKQLCTIPRDATYYSYQNR YHFCEKCFNEIQGESVSLGDDPSQPQT
 INKEQFSKRKNDTLDPELFVECTECGRKMHQICVLHHEIWPAGFVCDGCLKKSARTRK
 ENKFSAKRLPSTRLGTFLNRVNDFLRRQNHPESEGEVTVRVVHASDKTVEVKPGMKAR
 FVDSGEMAESFPYRTKALFAFEEIDGVDLCFFGMHVQEYGSDCPPPNQRRVYISYLDV

HFFRPKCLRTAVYHEILIGYLEYVKKLGYTTGHIWACPPSEGDDYIFHCHPPDQKIPKPK
 RLQEWFKKMLDKAVSERIVHDYKDIFKQATEDRLTSAKELPYFEGDFWPNVLEESIKEL
 EQEEEEERKREENTSNESTDVTKGDSKNAKKKNNKKT SKNKSSL SRGNKKKPGMPNVSN
 DLSQKLYATMEKHKEVFFVIRLIAGPAANSLPPIVDPDPLIPCDLMDGRDAFLT LARDKH
 LEFSSLRRAQWSTMCMMLVELHTQSQD

p300 Core Effector (aa 1048-1664 of SEQ ID NO: 2 with 1396/1397 SY/WW mutations) (SEQ ID NO: 8)

IFKPEELRQALMPTLEALYRQDPESLPFRQPVPDQLLGIPDYFDIVKSPMDLSTIKRKLD
 GQYQEPWQYVDDIWLMFNNAWL YNRKTSRVYKYCSKLSEVFEQEIDPVMQSLGYCCG
 RKLEFSPQTLCCYGKQLCTIPRDATYYSYQNR YHFCEKCFNEIQGESVSLGDDPSQPQT
 INKEQFSKRKNDTLDP ELFVECTECGRKMHQICVLHHEIWPAGFVCDGCLKKSARTRK
 ENKFSAKRLPSTR LGTFLENRVND FLRRQNHPESEGEVTVRVVHASDKTVEVKPGMKAR
 FVDSGEMAESFPYRTKALFAFEEIDGV DLCFFGMHVQEYGSDCPPPNQRRVYIWWLDS
 VHFFRPKCLRTAVYHEILIGYLEYVKKLGYTTGHIWACPPSEGDDYIFHCHPPDQKIPKPK
 KRLQEWYKKMLDKAVSERIVHDYKDIFKQATEDRLTSAKELPYFEGDFWPNVLEESIKE
 LEQEEEEERKREENTSNESTDVTKGDSKNAKKKNNKKT SKNKSSL SRGNKKKPGMPNVSN
 NDLSQKLYATMEKHKEVFFVIRLIAGPAANSLPPIVDPDPLIPCDLMDGRDAFLT LARDK
 HLEFSSLRRAQWSTMCMMLVELHTQSQD

p300 Core Effector (aa 1048-1664 of SEQ ID NO: 2 with H1415A, E1423A, Y1424A, L1428S, Y1430A, and H1434A mutations) (SEQ ID NO: 9)

IFKPEELRQALMPTLEALYRQDPESLPFRQPVPDQLLGIPDYFDIVKSPMDLSTIKRKLD
 GQYQEPWQYVDDIWLMFNNAWL YNRKTSRVYKYCSKLSEVFEQEIDPVMQSLGYCCG
 RKLEFSPQTLCCYGKQLCTIPRDATYYSYQNR YHFCEKCFNEIQGESVSLGDDPSQPQT
 INKEQFSKRKNDTLDP ELFVECTECGRKMHQICVLHHEIWPAGFVCDGCLKKSARTRK
 ENKFSAKRLPSTR LGTFLENRVND FLRRQNHPESEGEVTVRVVHASDKTVEVKPGMKAR
 FVDSGEMAESFPYRTKALFAFEEIDGV DLCFFGMHVQEYGSDCPPPNQRRVYISYLDV
 HFFRPKCLRTAVYAEILIGYLA AVKKSGATTGAIWACPPSEGDDYIFHCHPPDQKIPKPK
 RLQEWYKKMLDKAVSERIVHDYKDIFKQATEDRLTSAKELPYFEGDFWPNVLEESIKEL
 EQEEEEERKREENTSNESTDVTKGDSKNAKKKNNKKT SKNKSSL SRGNKKKPGMPNVSN
 DLSQKLYATMEKHKEVFFVIRLIAGPAANSLPPIVDPDPLIPCDLMDGRDAFLT LARDKH
 LEFSSLRRAQWSTMCMMLVELHTQSQD

Neisseria meningitidis Cas9 (with D16A, D587A, H588A, and N611A mutations) (SEQ ID NO: 10)

MAAFKPNPINYILGLAIGIASVGWAMVEIDEDENPICLIDLGV RVFERAEVPKTGDSLAM
 ARRLARSVRRLTRRR AHRLLRARLLKREGVLQAADFDENGLIKSLPNTPWQLRAAAL
 DRKLTPLEWSAVLLHLIKHRGYLSQRKNEGETADKELGALLKGVADNAHALQTGDFRT
 PAELALNKFEKESGHIRNQRGDYSHTFSRKDLQAE LILLFEKQKEFGNPHVSGGLKEGIE
 TLLMTQRPALSGDAVQKMLGHCTFEP AEPKAAKNTYTAERFIWLT KLNNLRILEQGSR
 PLTDTERATLMDEPYRKSKLT YAQARKLLGLEDTAFFKGLRYGKDNAEASTLMEMKA
 YHAISRALEKEGLKDKKSPLNLSPELQDEIGTAFSLFKTDEDITGRLKDRIQPEILEALLKH

ISFDK FVQISLKALRRIVPLMEQGKRYDEACAEIYGDHYGKKNTEEKIYLPIPADEIRNP
VVLRA LSQARKVINGV VRRY GSPARIHIETAREVGK SFKDRKEIEKRQEENRKDREKAA
AKFREYFPNFVGEPKSKDILKLRLYEQQH GKCLYSGKEINLGR LNEKGYVEIAAALPFSR
TWDDSFNNKVLVLGSEAQNKG NQTPYEYFNGKDNSREWQEFKARVETSRFPRSKKQRI
LLQKFDEDEGFKERNLNDTRYVNRFLCQFVADRMRLTGKGKKRVFASNGQITNLLRGFW
GLRKVRAENDRH HALDAVVVACSTVAMQQKITRFVRYKEMNAFDGKTIDKETGEVLH
QKTHFPQPWEFFAQEVMIRVFGKPDGKPEFEEADTPEKLRTLLAEKLSSRPEAVHEYVTP
LFVSRAPNRKMSGQGHMETVKS AKRLDEGVSVLRVPLTQLKLDLEK MVNREREPKL
YEALKARLEAHKDDPAKAF AEPFYKYDKAGNRTQQVKAVRVEQVQKTGVWVRNHNG
IADNATMVRVDVF EKGD KYL VPIYSWQVAKGILPDRAVVQKDEEDWQLIDDSFNFK
FSLHPNDLVEVITKKAR MFGYFASCHRG TGNINIRIHDLDHKIGKNGILEGIGVKTALS FQ
KYQIDELGKEIRPCRLKKRPPVR

3X “Flag” Epitope (SEQ ID NO: 11)

DYKDHDGDYKDHDIDYKDDDDK

Nuclear Localization Sequence (SEQ ID NO: 12)

PKKKRKVG

HA Epitope (SEQ ID NO: 13)

YPYDVPDYAS

VP64 Effector (SEQ ID NO: 14)

DALDDFDLDMLGSDALDDFDLDMLGSDALDDFDLDMLGSDALDDFDLDML

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A fusion protein comprising two heterologous polypeptide domains, wherein the first polypeptide domain comprises a Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats associated (Cas) protein and the second polypeptide domain comprises a peptide having histone acetyltransferase activity.
2. The fusion protein of claim 1, wherein the fusion protein activates transcription of a target gene.
3. The fusion protein of claim 1 or 2, wherein the Cas protein comprises Cas9.
4. The fusion protein of claim 3, wherein the Cas9 comprises at least one amino acid mutation which knocks out nuclease activity of Cas9.
5. The fusion protein of claim 4, wherein the Cas protein comprises SEQ ID NO: 1 or SEQ ID NO: 10.
6. The fusion protein of any one of claims 1-5, wherein the second polypeptide domain comprises a histone acetyltransferase effector domain.
7. The fusion protein of claim 6, wherein the histone acetyltransferase effector domain is a p300 histone acetyltransferase effector domain.
8. The fusion protein of any one of claims 1-7, wherein the second polypeptide domain comprises SEQ ID NO: 2 or SEQ ID NO: 3.
9. The fusion protein of any one of claims 1-8, wherein the first polypeptide domain comprises SEQ ID NO: 1 or SEQ ID NO: 10 and the second polypeptide domain comprises SEQ ID NO: 2 or SEQ ID NO: 3.
10. The fusion protein of any one of claims 1-9, wherein the first polypeptide domain comprises SEQ ID NO: 1 and the second polypeptide domain comprises SEQ ID NO: 3, or the first polypeptide domain comprises SEQ ID NO: 10 and the second polypeptide domain comprises SEQ ID NO: 3.

11. The fusion protein of any one of claims 1-10, further comprising a linker connecting the first polypeptide domain to the second polypeptide domain.

12. The fusion protein of any one of claims 1-11, wherein the fusion protein comprises an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 140, 141, or 149.

13. A DNA targeting system comprising the fusion protein of any one of claims 1-12 and at least one guide RNA (gRNA).

14. The DNA targeting system of claim 13, wherein the at least one gRNA comprises a 12-22 base pair complementary polynucleotide sequence of the target DNA sequence followed by a protospacer-adjacent motif.

15. The DNA targeting system of claim 13 or 14, wherein the at least one gRNA targets a target region, the target region comprises a target enhancer, target regulatory element, a cis-regulatory region of a target gene, or a trans-regulatory region of a target gene.

16. The DNA targeting system of claim 15, wherein the target region is a distal or proximal cis-regulatory region of the target gene.

17. The DNA targeting system of claim 15 or 16, wherein the target region is an enhancer region or a promoter region of the target gene.

18. The DNA targeting system of any one of claims 15- 17, wherein the target gene is an endogenous gene or a transgene.

19. The DNA targeting system of claim 15, wherein the target region comprises a target enhancer or a target regulatory element.

20. The DNA targeting system of claim 19, wherein the target enhancer or target regulatory element control the gene expression of more than one target gene.

21. The DNA targeting system of any one of claims 15-20, wherein the DNA targeting system comprises between one and ten different gRNAs.

22. The DNA targeting system of any one of claims 15-21, wherein the DNA targeting system comprises one gRNA.

23. The DNA targeting system of any one of claims 15-22, wherein the target region is located on the same chromosome as the target gene.

24. The DNA targeting system of claim 23, wherein the target region is located about 1 base pair to about 100,000 base pairs upstream of a transcription start site of the target gene.

25. The DNA targeting system of claim 24, wherein the target region is located about 1000 base pairs to about 50,000 base pairs upstream of the transcription start site of the target gene.

26. The DNA targeting system of any one of claims 15-22, wherein the target region is located on a different chromosome as the target gene.

27. The DNA targeting system of any one of claims 15-28, wherein the different gRNAs bind to different target regions.

28. The DNA targeting system of claim 27, wherein the different gRNAs bind to target regions of different target genes.

29. The DNA targeting system of claim 27, wherein the expression of two or more target genes are activated.

30. The DNA targeting system of any one of claims 15-29, wherein the target gene is selected from the group consisting of *IL1RN*, *MYOD1*, *OCT4*, *HBE*, *HBG*, *HBD*, *HBB*, *MYOCD*, *PAX7*, *FGF1A*, *FGF1B*, and *FGF1C*.

31. The DNA targeting system of claim 30, wherein the target region is at least one of HS2 enhancer of the human β -globin locus, distal regulatory region (DRR) of the *MYOD* gene, core enhancer (CE) of the *MYOD* gene, proximal (PE) enhancer region of the *OCT4* gene, or distal (DE) enhancer region of the *OCT4* gene.

32. The DNA targeting system of any one of claims 13-31, wherein the gRNA comprises at least one of SEQ ID NOs: 23-73, 188-223, or 224-254.

33. An isolated polynucleotide encoding the fusion protein of any one of claims 1-12 or the DNA targeting system of any one of claims 13-32.

34. A vector comprising the isolated polynucleotide of claim 33.

35. A cell comprising the isolated polynucleotide of claim 33 or the vector of claim 34.

36. A kit comprising the fusion protein of any one of claims 1-12, the DNA targeting system of claims 13-32, the isolated polynucleotide of claim 33, the vector of claim 34, or the cell of claim 35.

37. A method of activating gene expression of a target gene in a cell, the method comprising contacting the cell with the fusion protein of any one of claims 1-12, the DNA targeting system of claims 13-32, the isolated polynucleotide of claim 33, or the vector of claim 34.

38. A method of activating gene expression of a target gene in a cell, the method comprising contacting the cell with a polynucleotide encoding a DNA targeting system, wherein the DNA targeting system comprises the fusion protein of any one of claims 1-12 and at least one guide RNA (gRNA).

39. The method of claim 38, wherein the at least one gRNA comprises a 12-22 base pair complementary polynucleotide sequence of the target DNA sequence followed by a protospacer-adjacent motif.

40. The method of claim 38 or 39, wherein the at least one gRNA targets a target region, the target region is a cis-regulatory region or a trans-regulatory region of a target gene.

41. The method of claim 40, wherein the target region is a distal or proximal cis-regulatory region of the target gene.

42. The method of claim 40 or 41, wherein the target region is an enhancer region or a promoter region of the target gene.

43. The method of claim 40-42, wherein the target gene is an endogenous gene or a transgene.

44. The method of claim 43, wherein the DNA targeting system comprises between one and ten different gRNAs.

45. The method of claim 43, wherein the DNA targeting system comprises one gRNA.

46. The method of claim 40-45, wherein the target region is located on the same chromosome as the target gene.

47. The method of claim 46, wherein the target region is located about 1 base pair to about 100,000 base pairs upstream of a transcription start site of the target gene.

48. The method of claim 46, wherein the target region is located about 1000 base pairs to about 50,000 base pairs upstream of the transcription start site of the target gene.

49. The method of claim 40-45, wherein the target region is located on a different chromosome as the target gene.

50. The method of claim 40-45, wherein the different gRNAs bind to different target regions.

51. The method of claim 50, wherein the different gRNAs bind to target regions of different target genes.

52. The method of claim 51, wherein the expression of two or more target genes are activated.

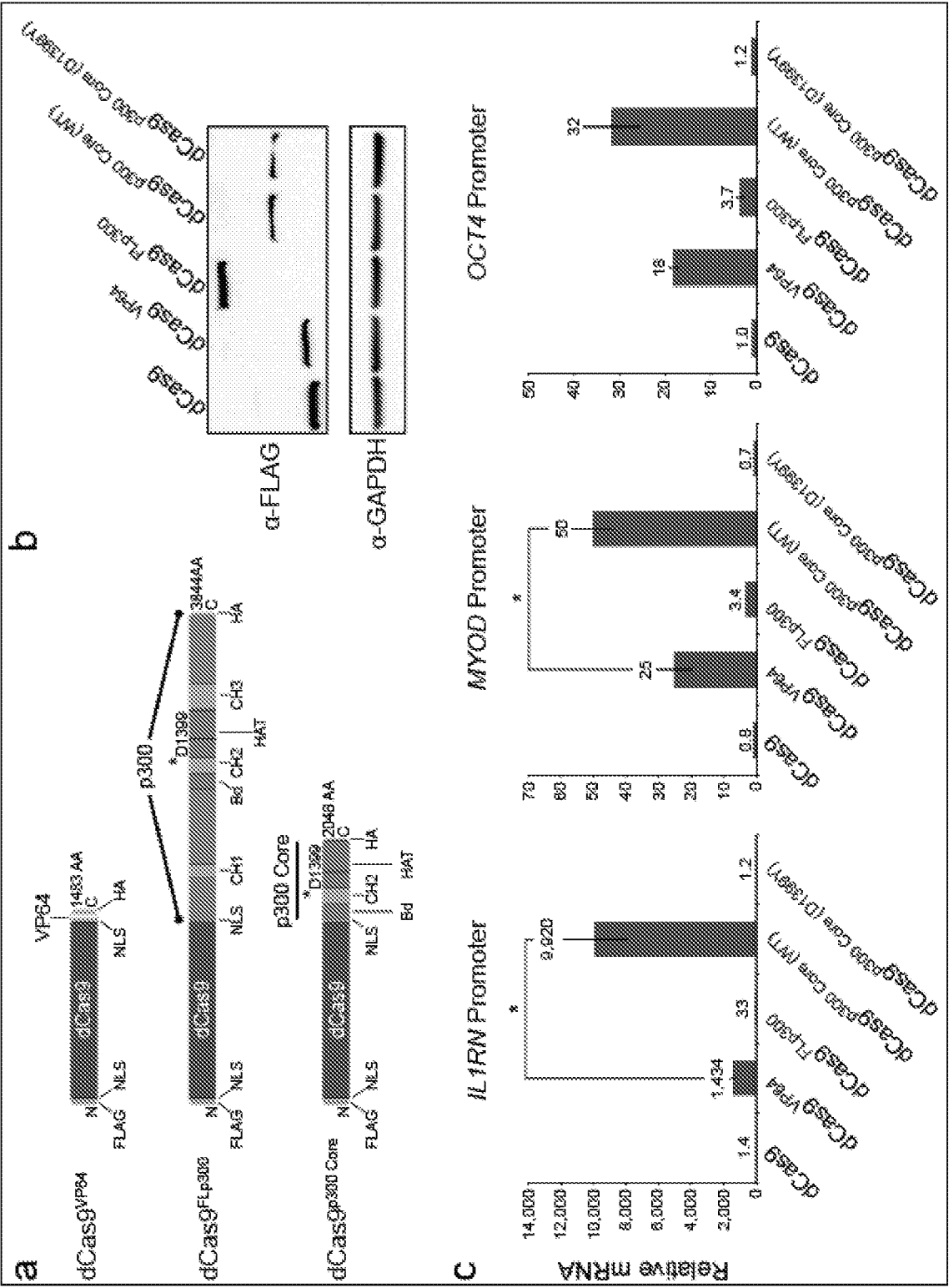
53. The method of claim 40-52, wherein the target gene is selected from the group consisting of *IL1RN*, *MYOD1*, *OCT4*, *HBE*, *HBG*, *HBD*, *HBB*, *MYOCD*, *PAX7*, *FGF1A*, *FGF1B*, and *FGF1C*.

54. The method of claim 53, wherein the target region is at least one of HS2 enhancer of the human β -globin locus, distal regulatory region (DRR) of the *MYOD* gene, core enhancer (CE) of the *MYOD* gene, proximal (PE) enhancer region of the *OCT4* gene, or distal (DE) enhancer region of the *OCT4* gene.

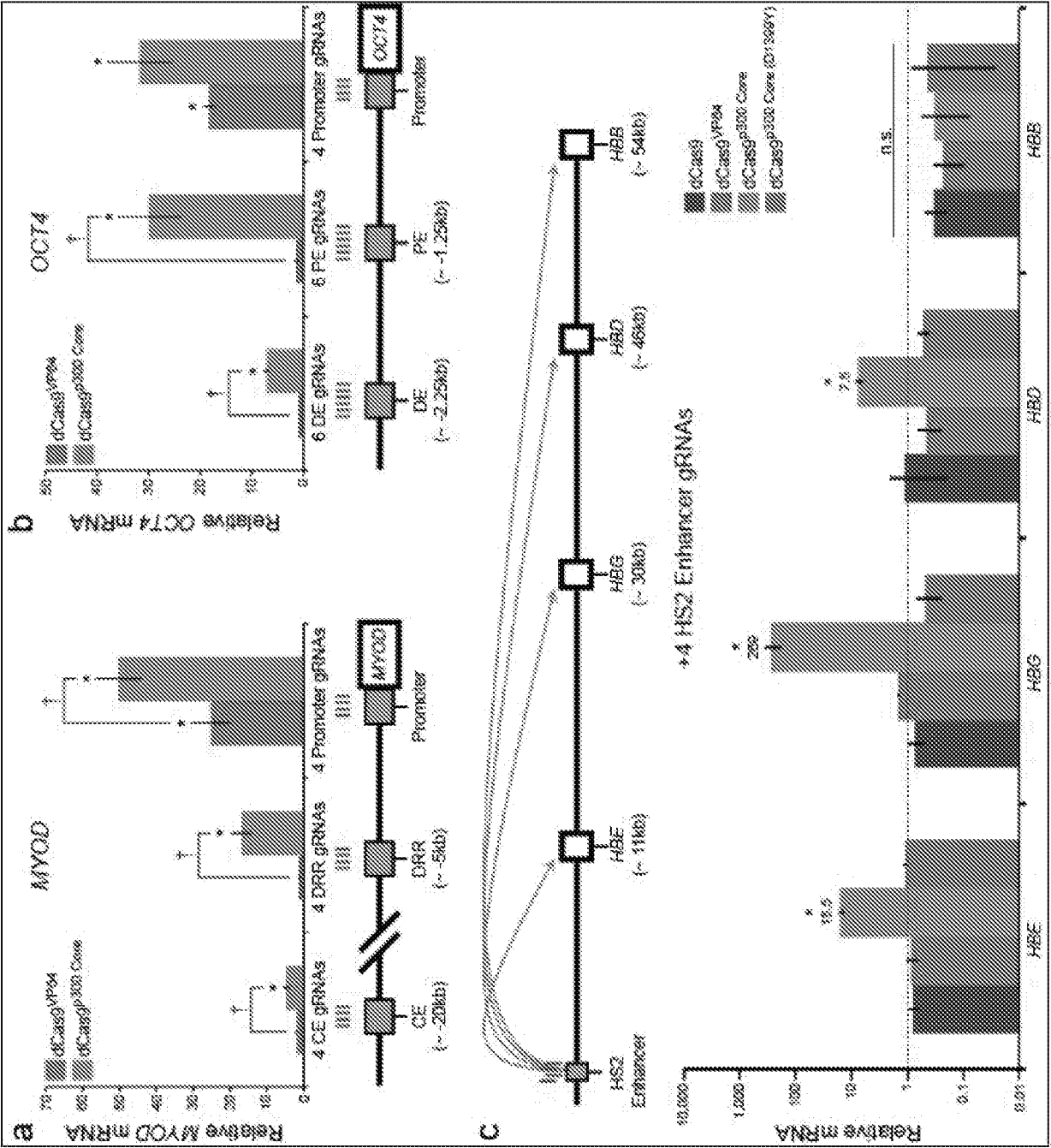
55. The method of claim 37-54, wherein the gRNA comprises at least one of SEQ ID NOs: 23-73, 188-223, or 224-254.

56. The method of any one of claims 37-55, wherein the DNA targeting system is delivered to the cell virally or non-virally.

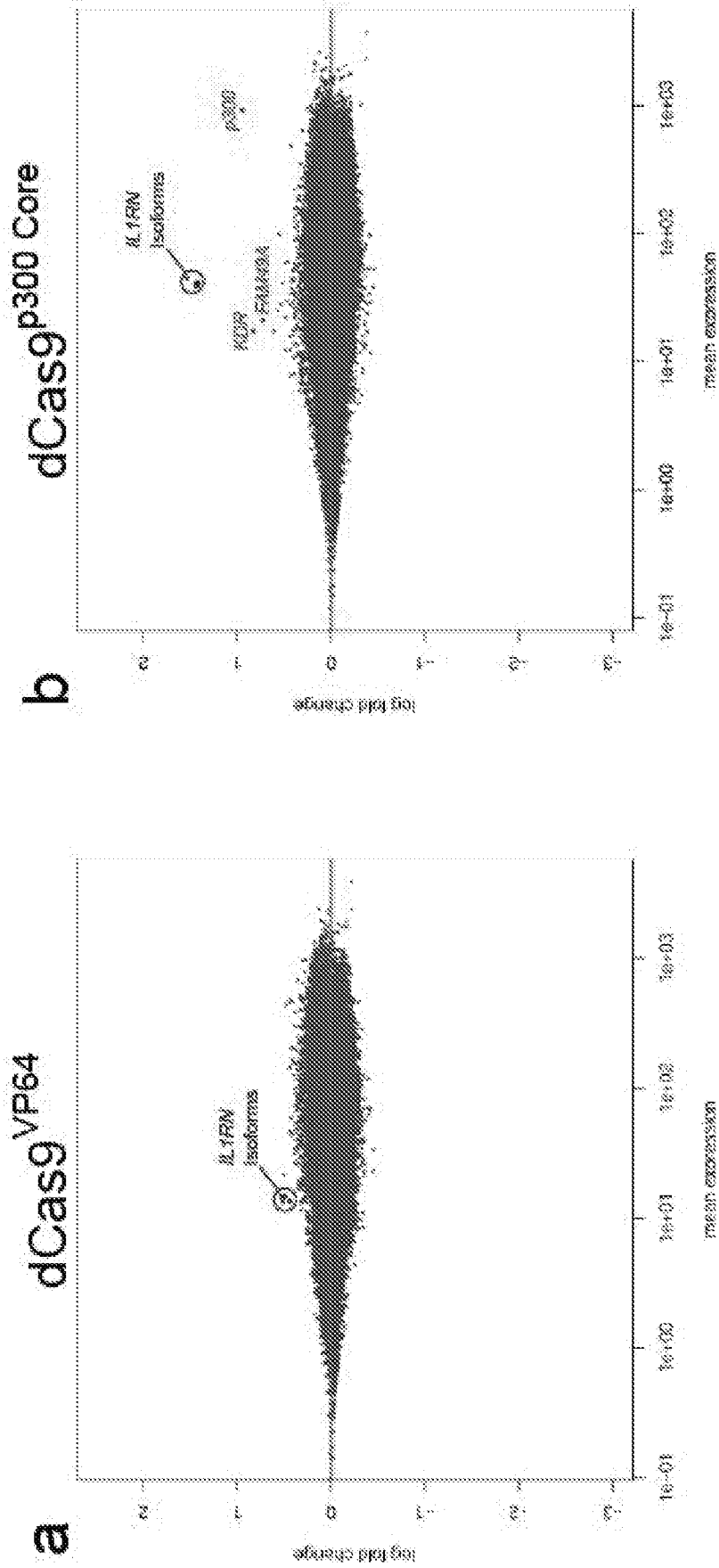
57. The method of any one of claims 37-56, wherein the cell is a mammalian cell.



FIGS. 1A-1C



FIGS. 2A-2C



FIGS. 3A-3B

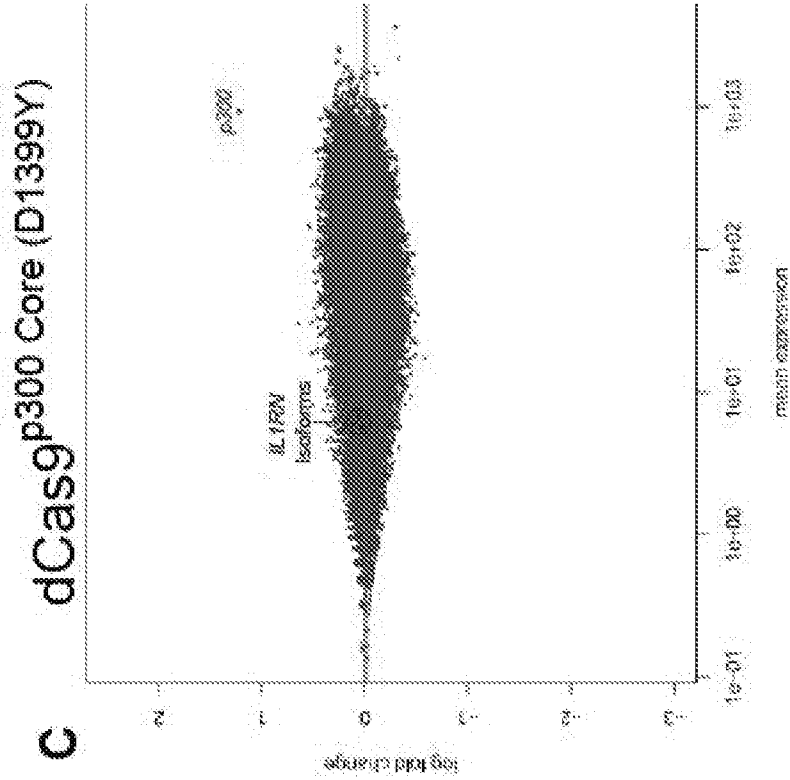


FIG. 3C

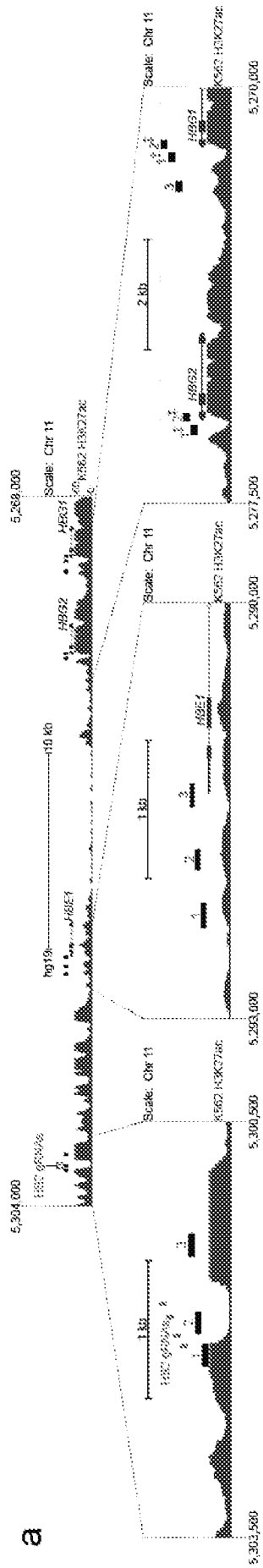
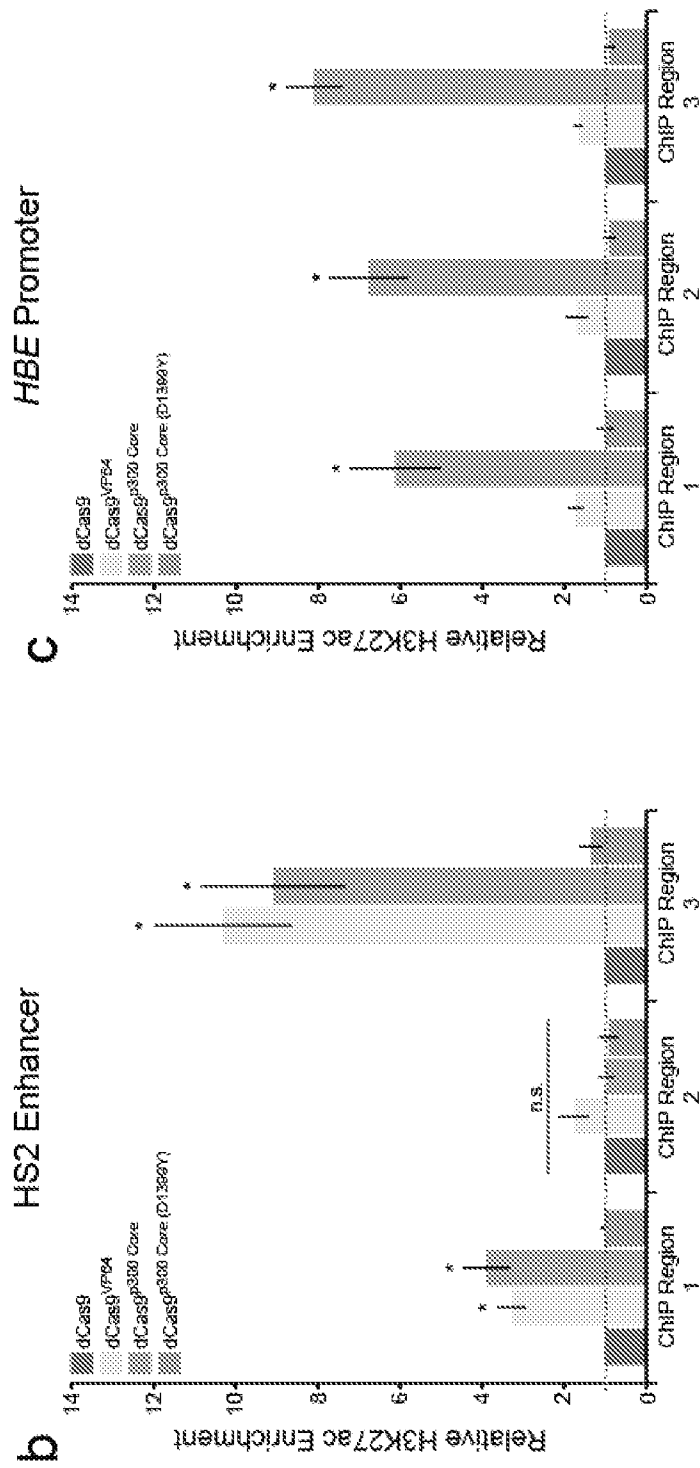


FIG. 4A



FIGS. 4B-4C

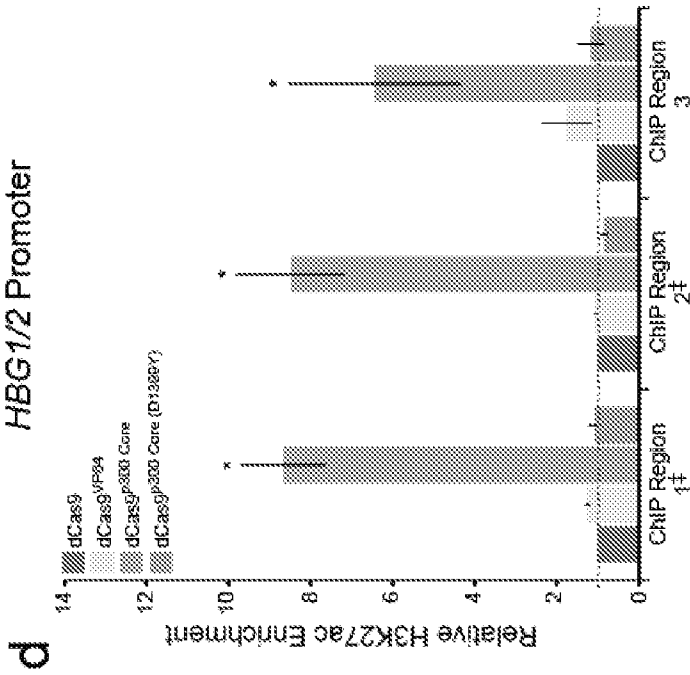
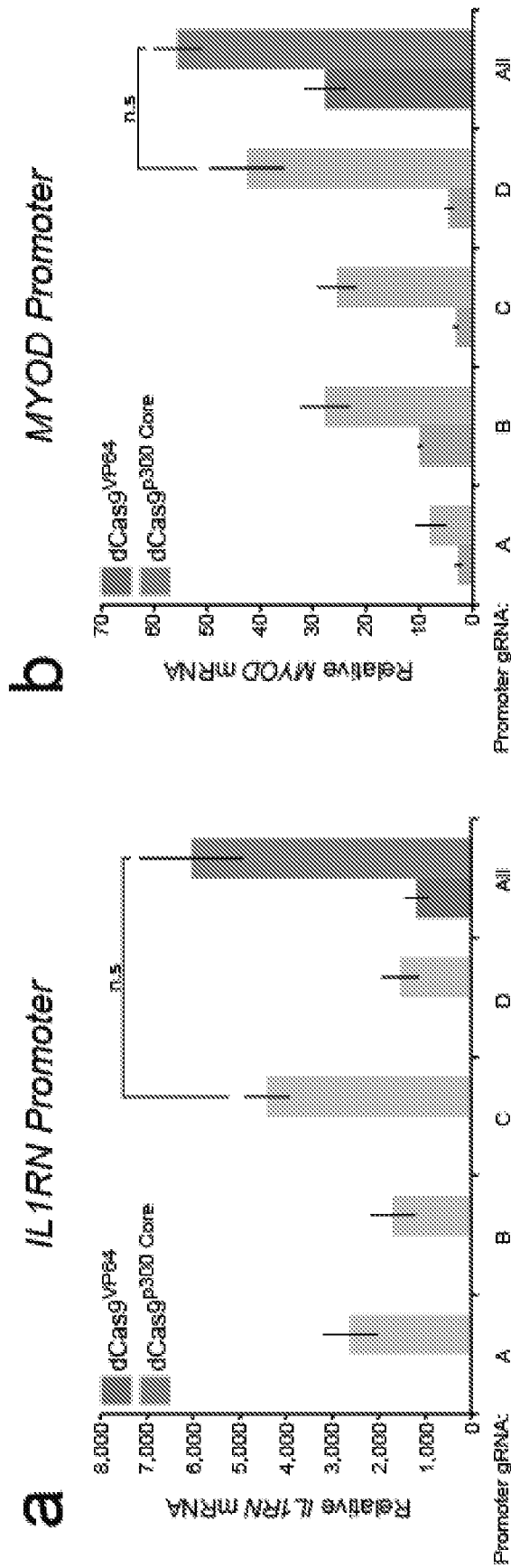
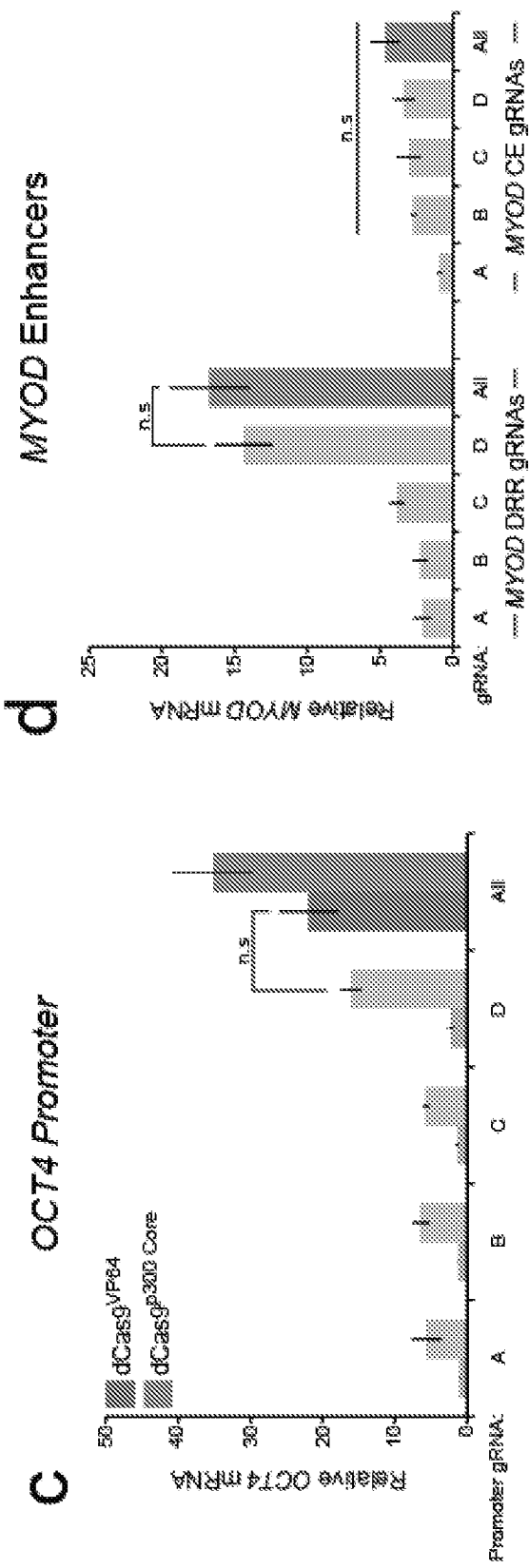


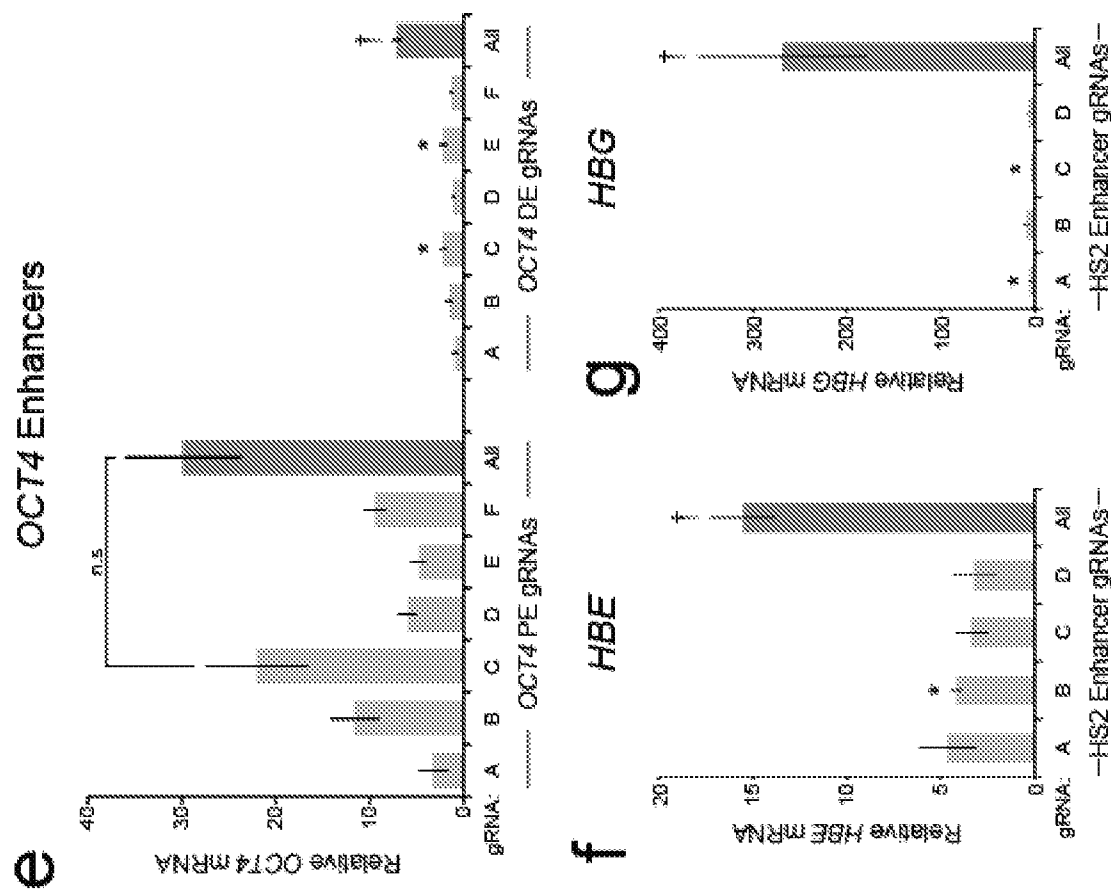
FIG. 4D



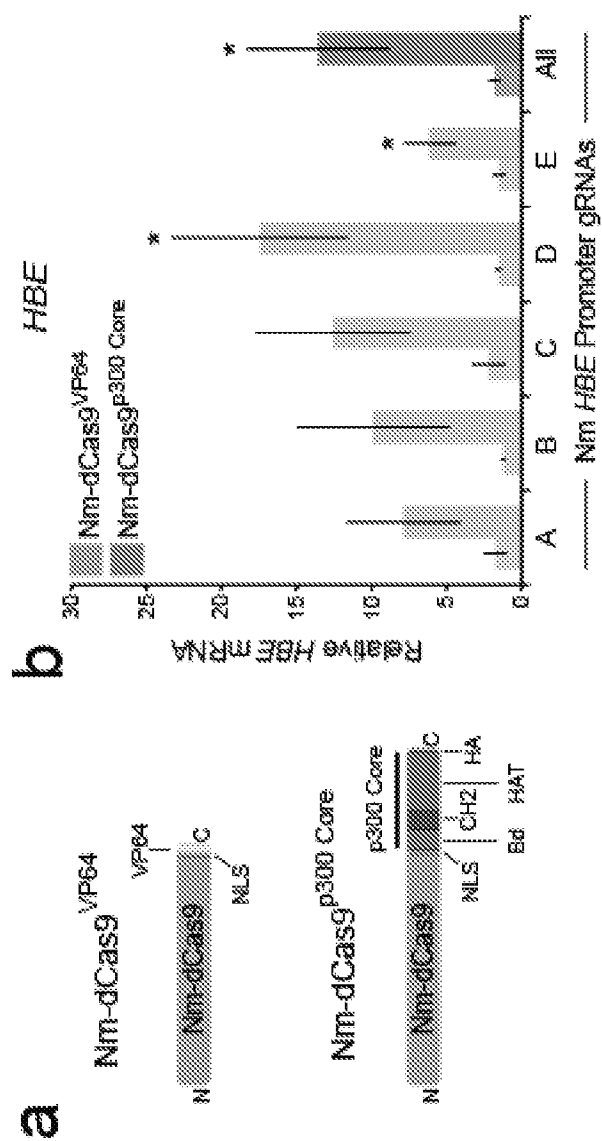
FIGS. 5A-5B



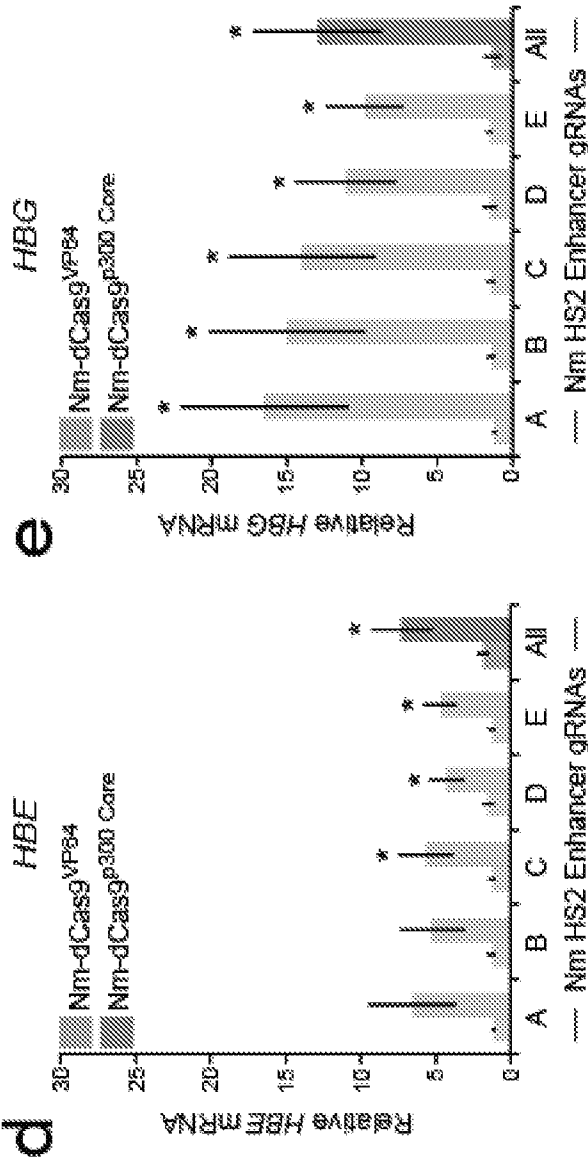
FIGS. 5C-5D



FIGS. 5E-5G



FIGS. 6A-6C



FIGS. 6D-6E

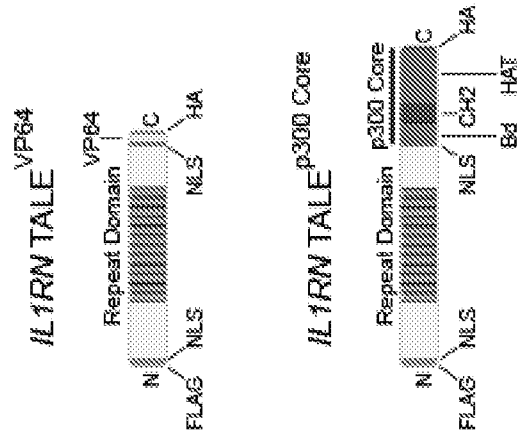


FIG. 6F

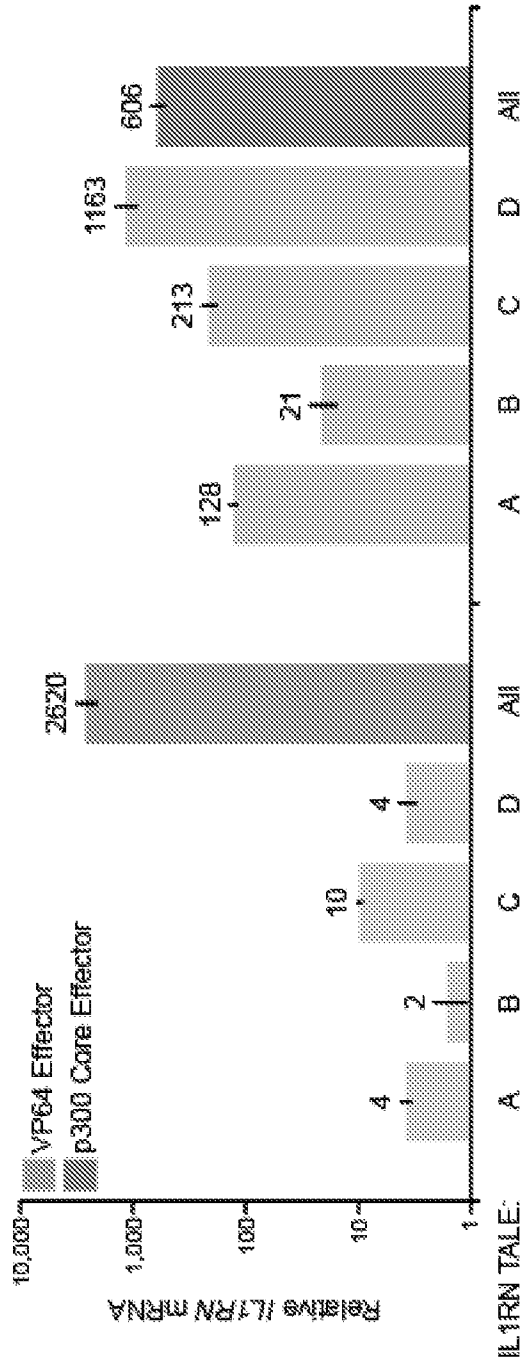
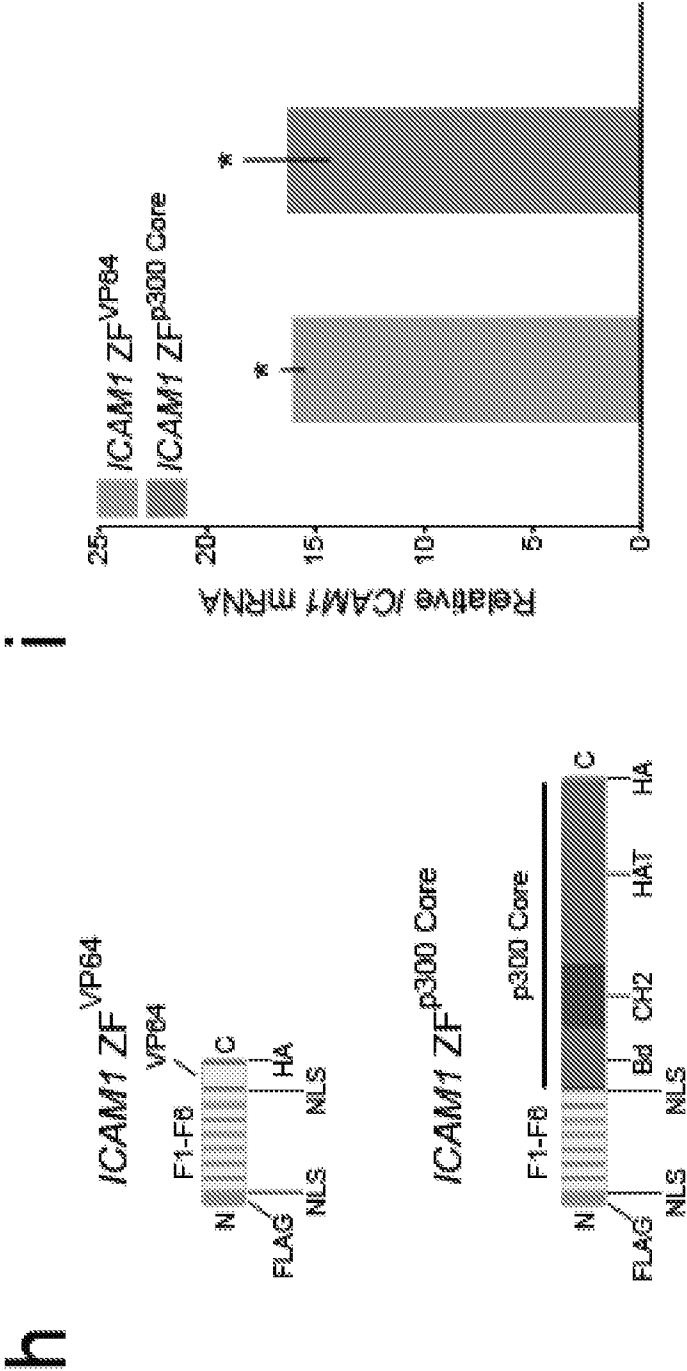
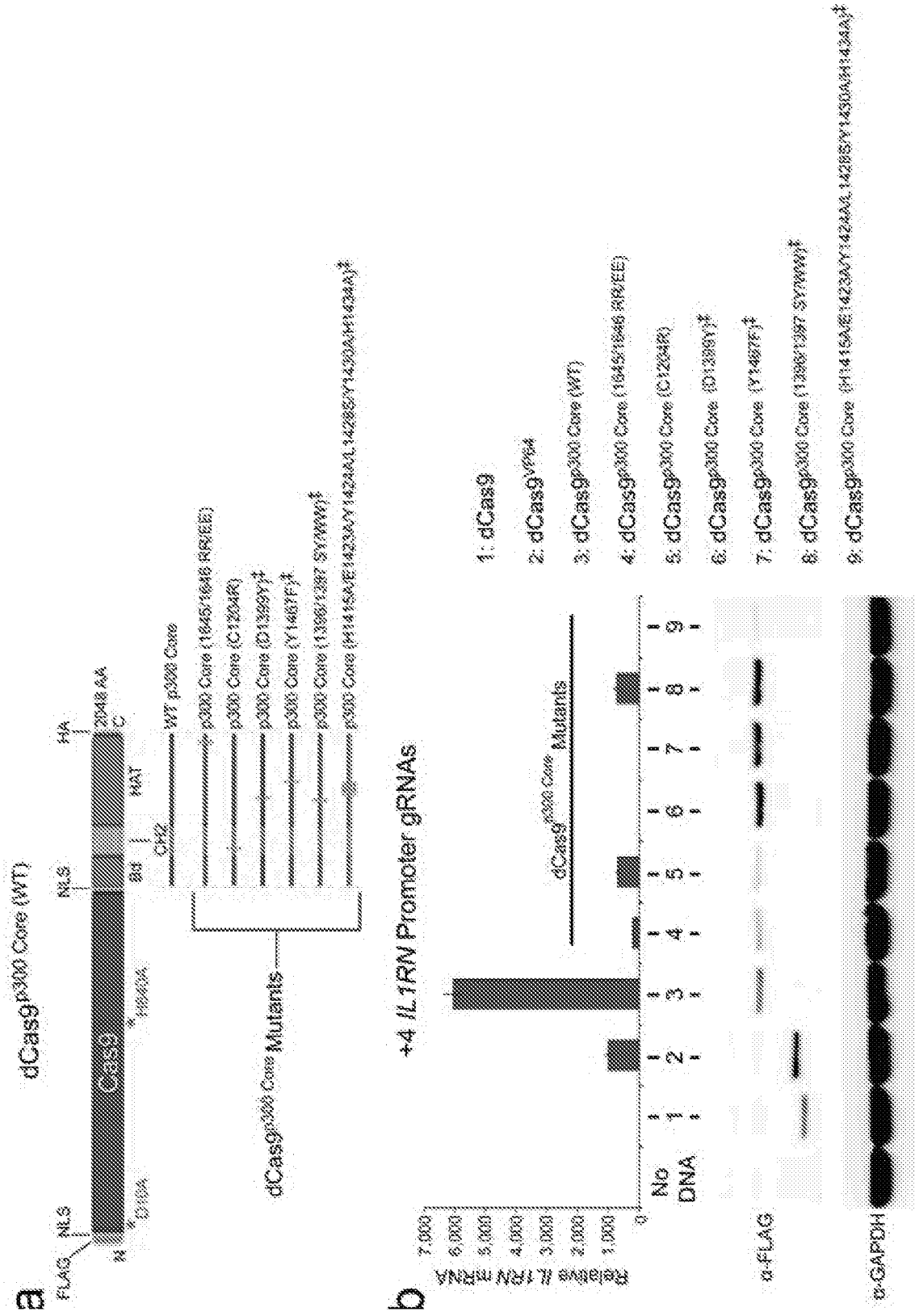


FIG. 6G



FIGS. 6H-6I



FIGS. 7A-7B

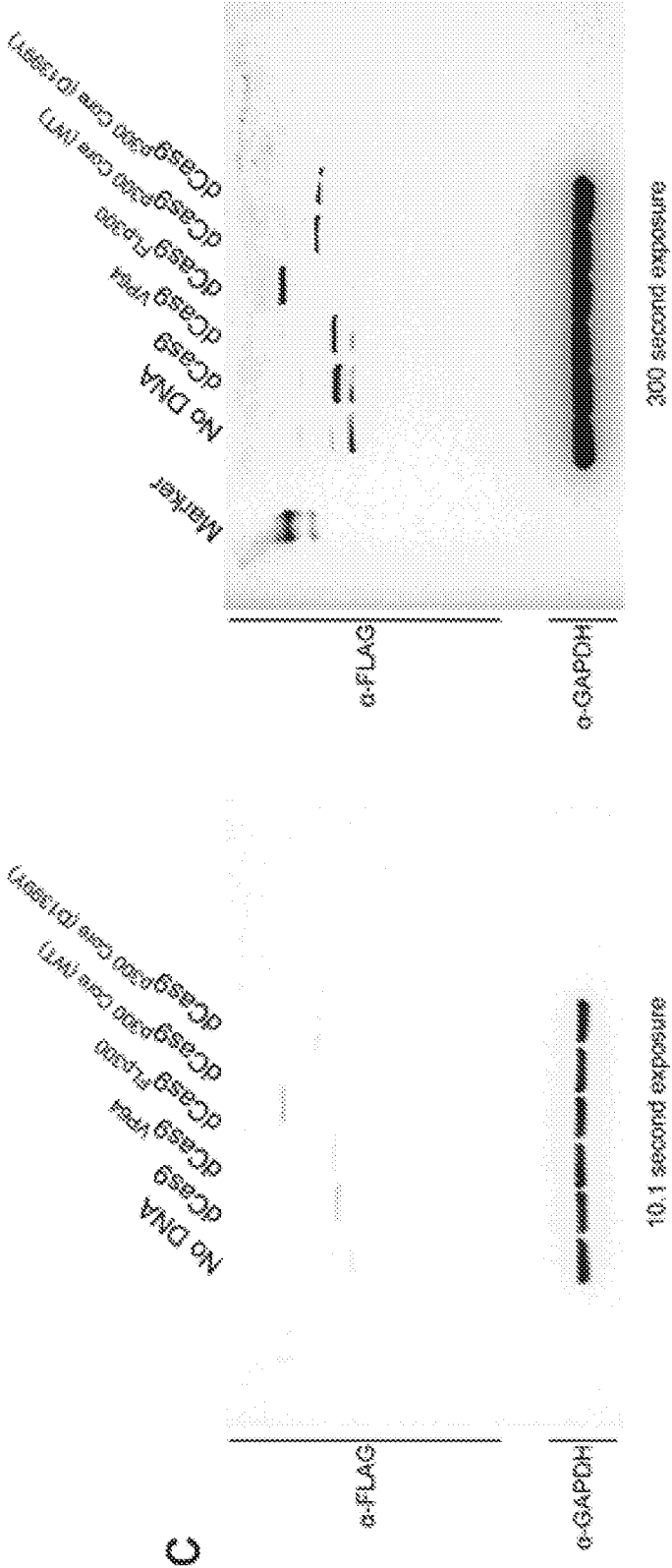


FIG. 7C

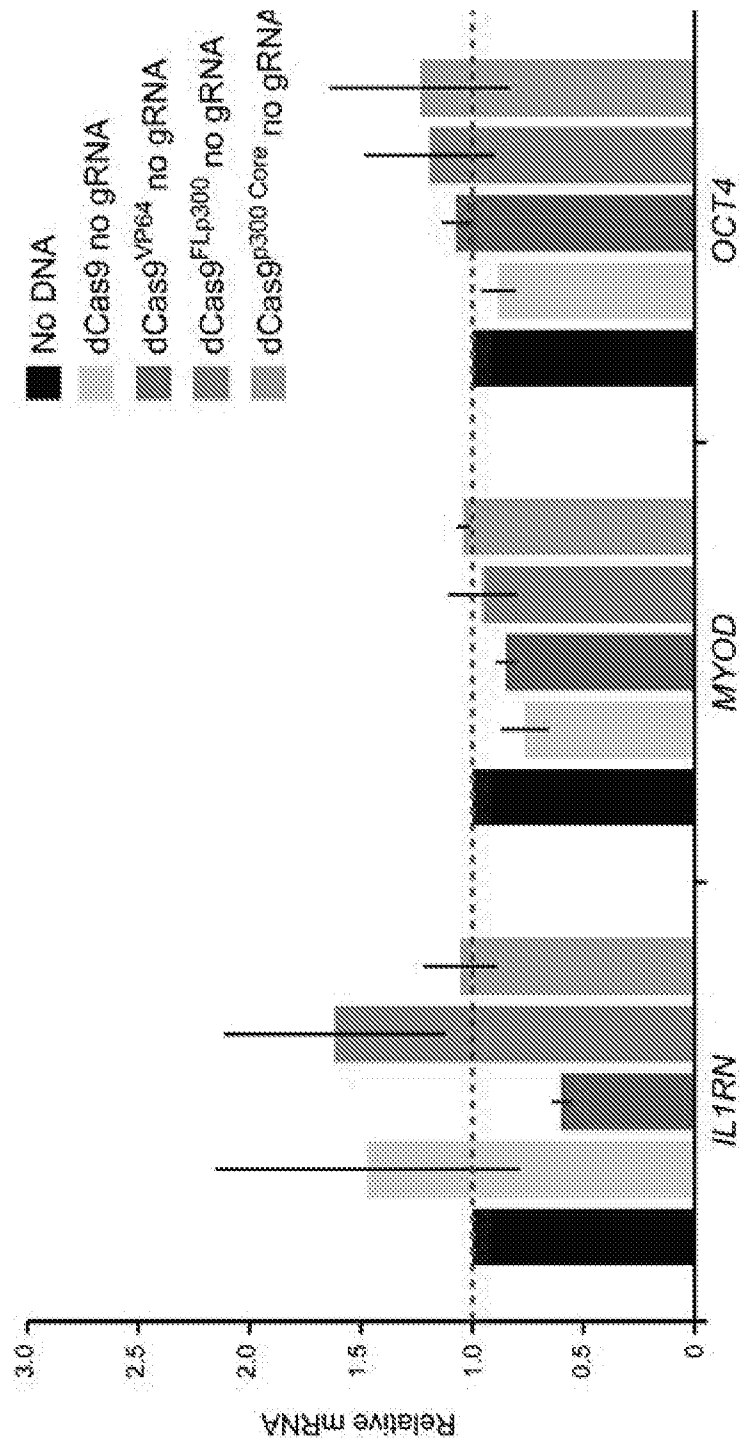


FIG. 8

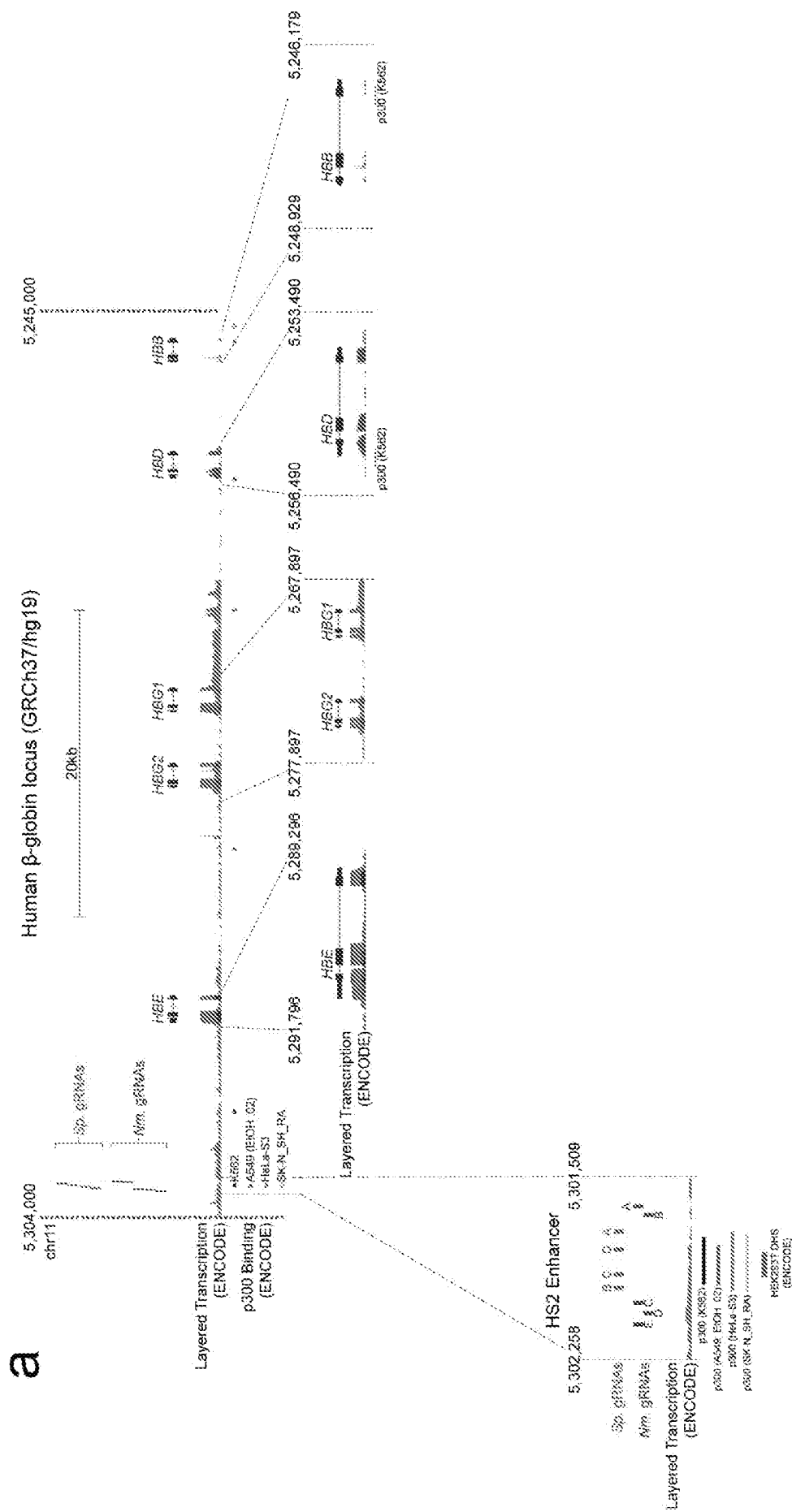
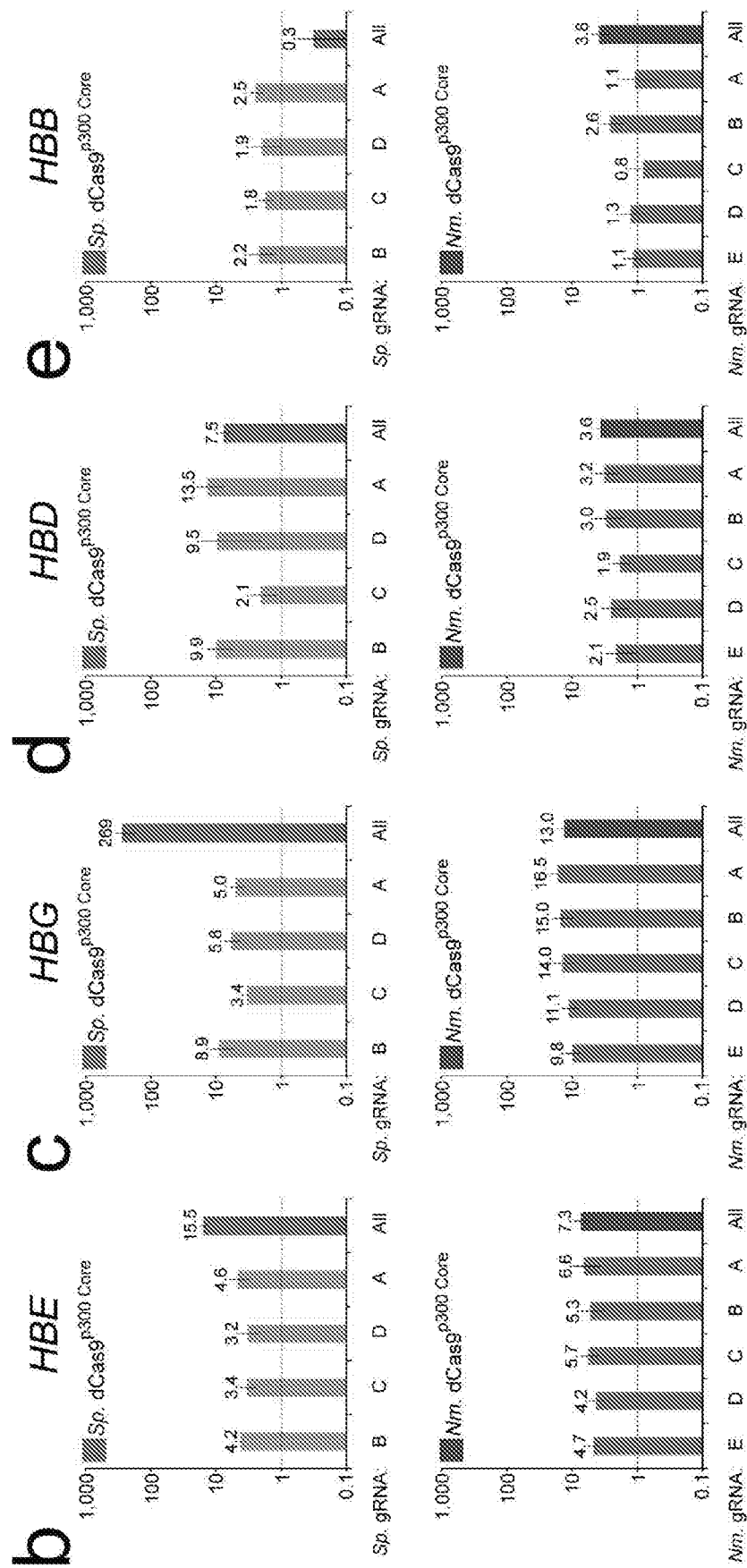
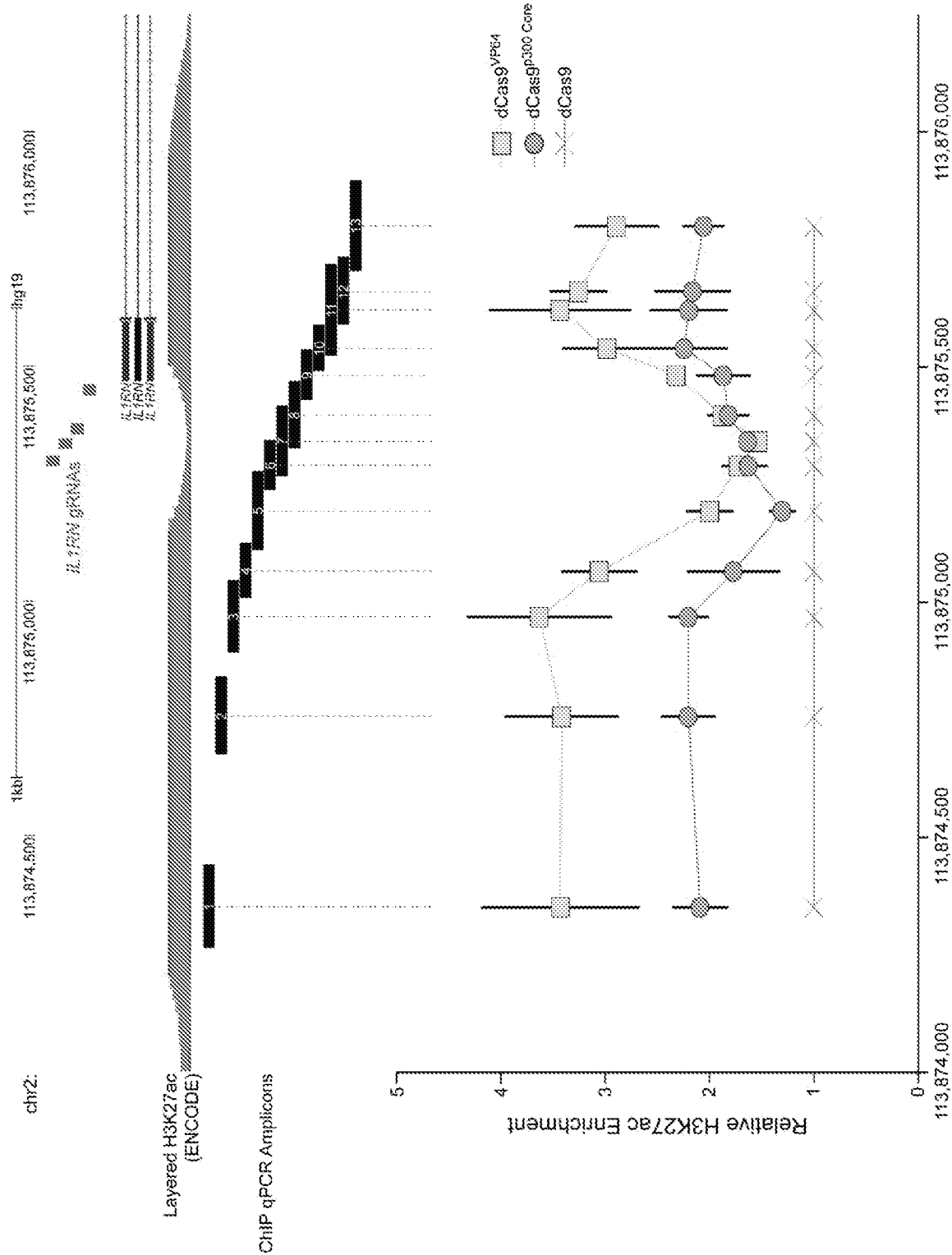
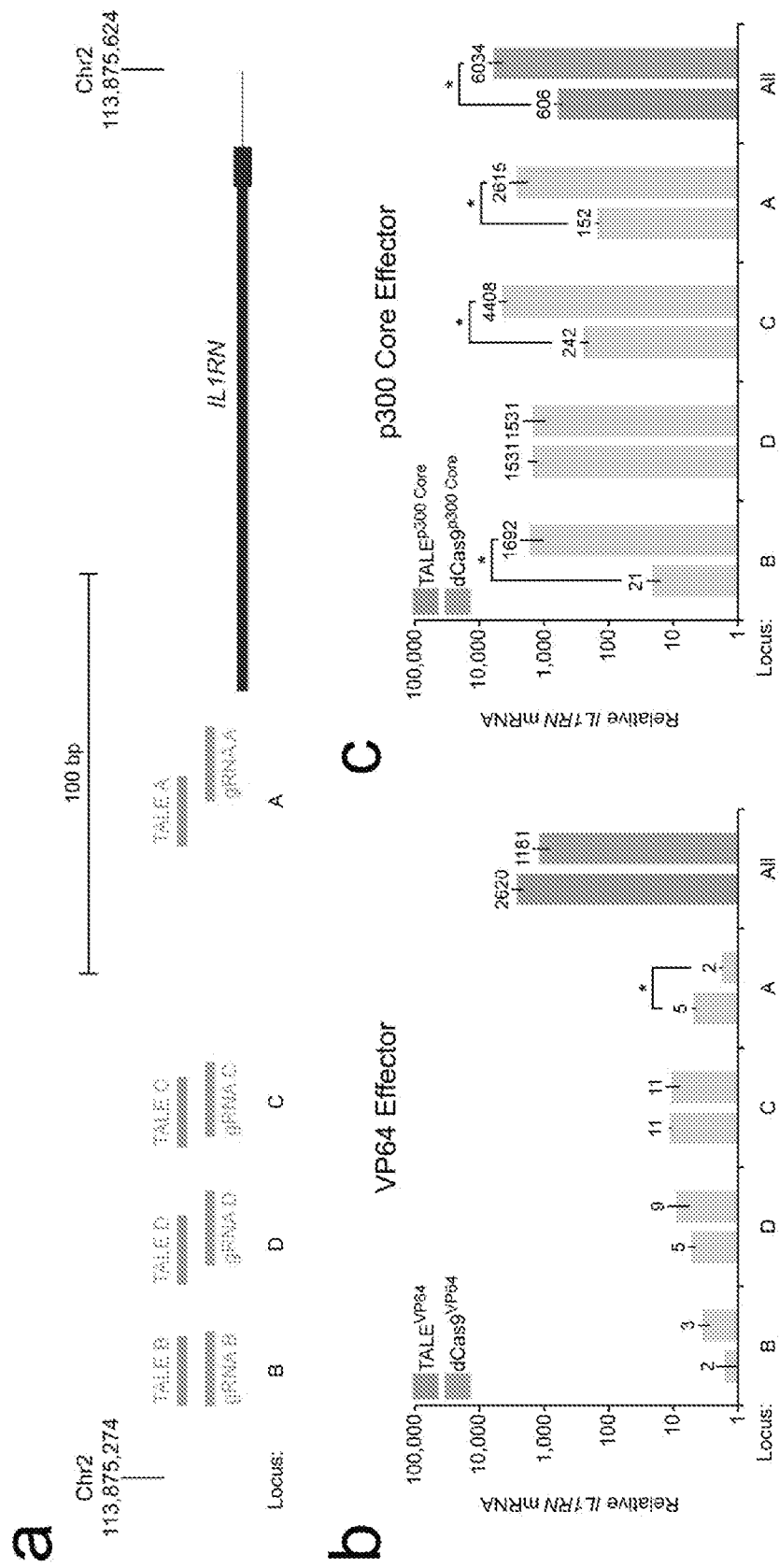


FIG. 9A

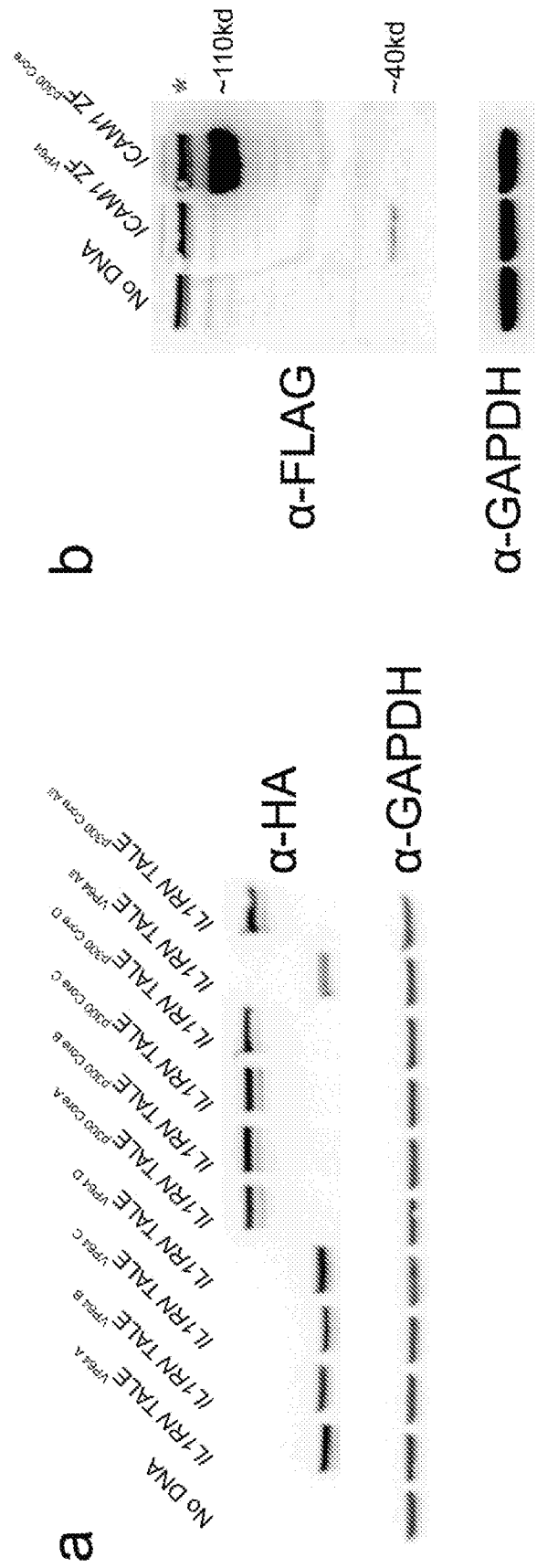


FIGS. 9B-9E

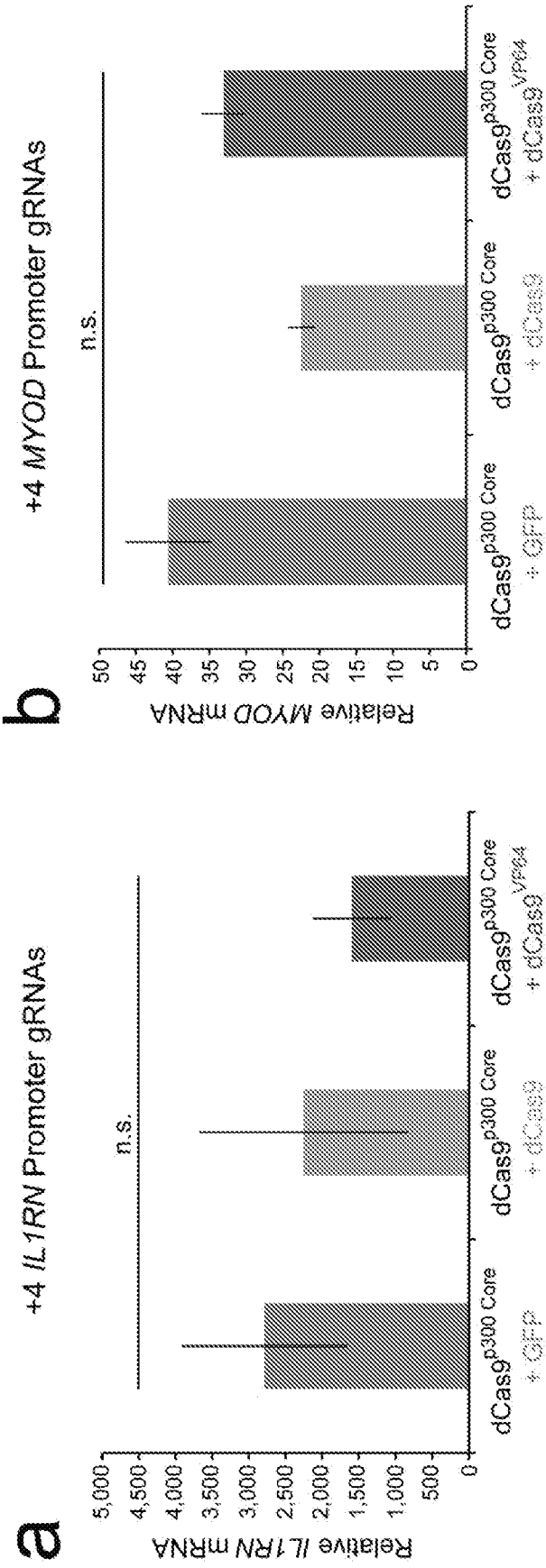




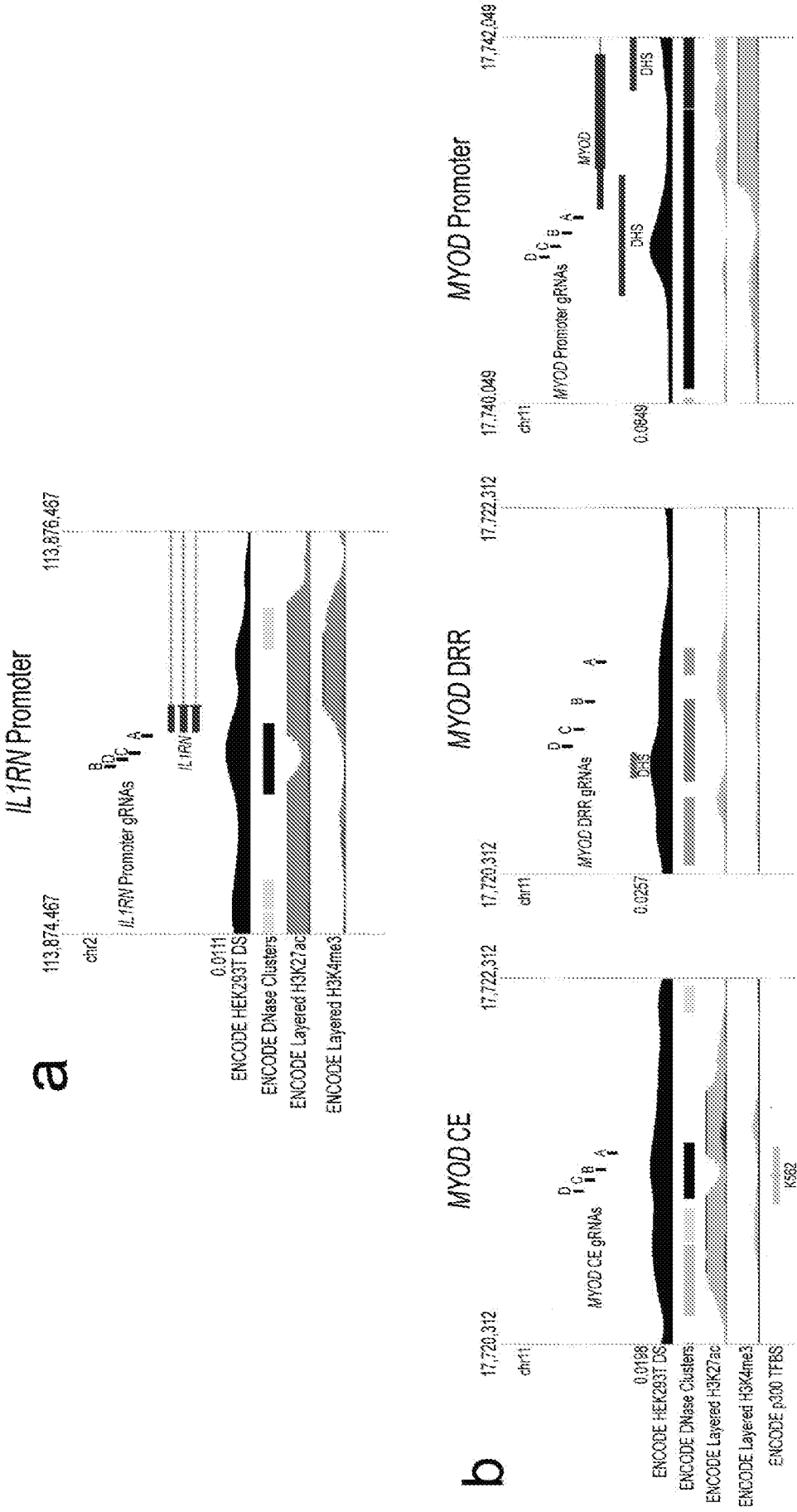
FIGS. 11A-11C



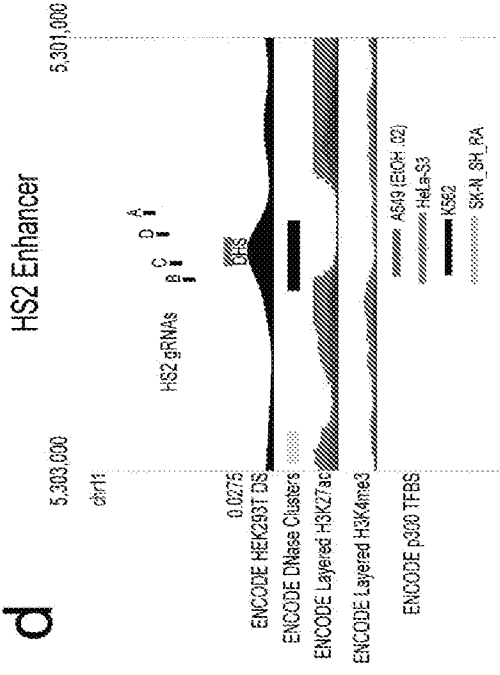
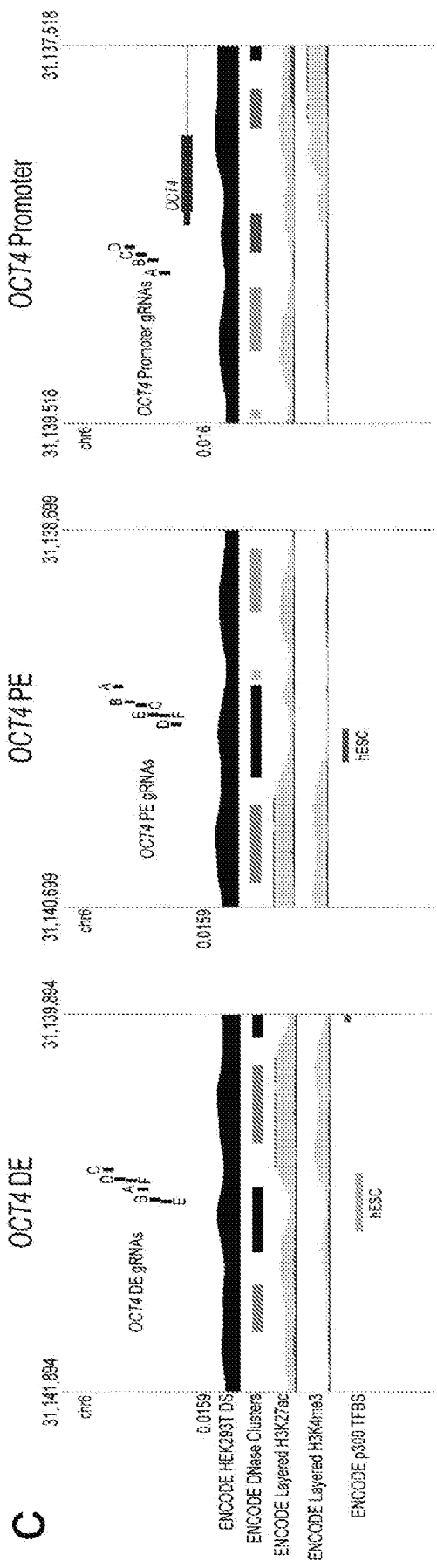
FIGS. 12A-12B



FIGS. 13A-13B



FIGS. 14A-14B



FIGS. 14C-14D

e

gRNA-Targeted Locus	Overlap DHS in HEK293T	Overlap DHS in Other ENCODE Lines	Multiple gRNAs Required for Maximal dCas9 ²⁰¹⁶ Core Target Activation	Overlap Endogenous p300 in ENCODE Lines
IL1RN Promoter	N	Y	N	N
MYOD OE	N	Y	N	Y
MYOD DR	Marginal	Y	N	N
MYOD Promoter	N	Y	N	N
OCT4 DE	N	Y	Y	Y
OCT4 PE	N	Y	N	Marginal
OCT4 Promoter	N	Y	N	N
H52 Enhancer	Y	Y	Y	Y

FIG. 14E

dCas9 HA: (Addgene plasmid 61355) amino acid sequence; **Flag Epitope** **Nuclear Localization Sequence**, *Streptococcus pyogenes* Cas9 (D10A, H840A), "HA" Epitope (SEQ ID NO: 138)

MDYDHDGDDYKDDYKDDDDMAPKKKKRKVGGRGMKKKYSIGLAICTNSVGWAVITDEYKVPSSKKFKVLGNTDRHSKKKNLIGALLFDSCETAETALRKRRTARRR
YTRRNRRICVLGEFSNEMAKVDSDFFHRLSESPLEEDKKHERHPFGNIVDEVAYHEKYPTIYHLRKKLVDSIDKADLRLLYALAHMIKFRGHFLIEGDLNPONSDV
DKLFQILVQTYNQLFEENPINASGVDAKAILSARLSKSRLENLIAQLPGKKNGLFONLIALSLGLTPNFKSNFLAEDAKILQLSKOTYDDDLNMLAQIGQQYADL
FLAANKLSDAILSDILRVNTEITKAPLSASMIKRYDEHHQDLTLAALVRQQLPEKVKKEFFDQSKNGYACDYDGGASQEEFYKFKPILKIMDDCTEELLVKLNREDLL
RKQRTFONGSIPHQHILGELHAILRRQEDFYPLDKAREKIEKILYFRPPYVOPPLARONSRAWMTRKSEETITPWNTEVVDKGCASQSFIERMTNFKNLPNKVL
PKHSLLYEYFTVYNELTKVKYVTEGMKRPAPLSGEQKKAIVDLLFKTNRKVTVKQLKEDYFKKIECFDSVEISGVEDNFNASLGTYHDLLKIKOKDFLOWEENEDILE
DIVLTLTLFEDREMERLKYTAHLFDDKVMKQLKRRRYTGWRLSKLNGIRDKQSGKTILDFKSDGFAKRNFMOLIHDDSLTFKEDIQKACVSGGGOSLHEHIA
NLAGSPAIKKGILQTVKVVDELVKVMGRRHKPENVIEMARENQTTOKGOKNSRERNKRIEKGKELSGQILKEHPVENTOLQNEKLYLYLQNGRDMYVDQGEIDNR
LSDYVDVAIVPQSLADDSIDAKVLTRSDKNRQKSDNVPSEEVKKMKNNVWRQLLNAKLTQRKFDNLTKAERGOLSELDKACFKRQLVETROITKHVAOILDSRM
NTKYDENDKILREKVKVITLKSCLVSDFRKDFQFYKVRNNYHHADAYLANAVGTALKKYPKALESEFVYGDYKAVYDVVRKMIKASEGSEIGKATAKYFFYSNIMNFFKY
EITLANGEIRKRPLIETNGETGEIVWDKGRDFATVRKVLSPQVNIYKATEVQTGQFSKESILPKRNSDKLARKKDWDPKPKYGGFSDPTVAYSVLVVAKVEKQKSK
KLKSVKELLGITHMERSSFEKNPIDFLEAKGYKEVKDLIKLPKYSLSFELENGRKRMLASAGELQKGNELALPSKYVNFYLASHYEKLGKSPEDNECKQLFVEQHK
HYLDEHEQISEFSKRVILADANLDKVL SAYNKKHROKPIREQAENIHFLTLTNLGAPAAFKYFTIDRKRYTSIKEVLDATLHQSHITGLYETRIDLSQLGCGDPIAGSKAS
PKKKRKVGGRALINPYDVPDYAS

dCas9^{V664}, (Addgene Plasmid 47107)⁴ amino acid sequence; **Flag Epitope** **Nuclear Localization Sequence**, *Streptococcus pyogenes* Cas9 (D10A, H840A), "HA" Epitope (SEQ ID NO: 139)

MDYDHDGDDYKDDYKDDDDMAPKKKKRKVGGRGMKKKYSIGLAICTNSVGWAVITDEYKVPSSKKFKVLGNTDRHSKKKNLIGALLFDSCETAETALRKRRTARRR
YTRRNRRICVLGEFSNEMAKVDSDFFHRLSESPLEEDKKHERHPFGNIVDEVAYHEKYPTIYHLRKKLVDSIDKADLRLLYALAHMIKFRGHFLIEGDLNPONSDV
DKLFQILVQTYNQLFEENPINASGVDAKAILSARLSKSRLENLIAQLPGKKNGLFONLIALSLGLTPNFKSNFOLAEDAKILQLSKOTYDDDLNMLAQIGQQYADL
FLAANKLSDAILSDILRVNTEITKAPLSASMIKRYDEHHQDLTLAALVRQQLPEKVKKEFFDQSKNGYACDYDGGASQEEFYKFKPILKIMDDCTEELLVKLNREDLL
RKQRTFONGSIPHQHILGELHAILRRQEDFYPLDKAREKIEKILYFRPPYVOPPLARONSRAWMTRKSEETITPWNTEVVDKGCASQSFIERMTNFKNLPNKVL
PKHSLLYEYFTVYNELTKVKYVTEGMKRPAPLSGEQKKAIVDLLFKTNRKVTVKQLKEDYFKKIECFDSVEISGVEDNFNASLGTYHDLLKIKOKDFLOWEENEDILE
DIVLTLTLFEDREMERLKYTAHLFDDKVMKQLKRRRYTGWRLSKLNGIRDKQSGKTILDFKSDGFAKRNFMOLIHDDSLTFKEDIQKACVSGGGOSLHEHIA
NLAGSPAIKKGILQTVKVVDELVKVMGRRHKPENVIEMARENQTTOKGOKNSRERNKRIEKGKELSGQILKEHPVENTOLQNEKLYLYLQNGRDMYVDQGEIDNR
LSDYVDVAIVPQSLADDSIDAKVLTRSDKNRQKSDNVPSEEVKKMKNNVWRQLLNAKLTQRKFDNLTKAERGOLSELDKACFKRQLVETROITKHVAOILDSRM
NTKYDENDKILREKVKVITLKSCLVSDFRKDFQFYKVRNNYHHADAYLANAVGTALKKYPKALESEFVYGDYKAVYDVVRKMIKASEGSEIGKATAKYFFYSNIMNFFKY
EITLANGEIRKRPLIETNGETGEIVWDKGRDFATVRKVLSPQVNIYKATEVQTGQFSKESILPKRNSDKLARKKDWDPKPKYGGFSDPTVAYSVLVVAKVEKQKSK
KLKSVKELLGITHMERSSFEKNPIDFLEAKGYKEVKDLIKLPKYSLSFELENGRKRMLASAGELQKGNELALPSKYVNFYLASHYEKLGKSPEDNECKQLFVEQHK
HYLDEHEQISEFSKRVILADANLDKVL SAYNKKHROKPIREQAENIHFLTLTNLGAPAAFKYFTIDRKRYTSIKEVLDATLHQSHITGLYETRIDLSQLGCGDPIAGSKAS
PKKKRKVGGRALINPYDVPDYAS

FIG. 15A

dCas9^{300A} Core: (Addgene Plasmid 61357) amino acid sequence: **MAPKKKKRKVG**GRGMDKKYSICLAICTNSVCWAVITDEYKVPSSKKFKVLONTDRHSKKNNLICALFDSCETAEATRLKRTARRRY
 TRKKRICYLOEIPSNEMAKVDCSFFHRLSEESFLVEEDKKHERHPFGNVDVAYHEKYPTIHLRKLKLVDSDDKADRLUYLALAHMKFRCHFLIEGDLAPDWSVDV
 KLFIOLVOTYNOLFEENPINASGVDAKAILSARLSKSRRLLENLAQIPGKKNGLFGLNLAISGLTPNPKSNFDLAEDAKLOLSKOTYDDDLNLLAQGGQYADLFL
 AAKNLSDAILLSDILRVNTEITKAPLSASMKRKYDEHHHODLTLLKALVRGOLPEKYKEFFDQSKNGSVAGYDGGASQEEFYKFKPHLEKNDGSTEELLVKLNREDLIRK
 QRTFDNGSIPHQHLGELHAILRRQEDFYPLKONREKIEKILTFRIPYYVGOPLARONSFAWMTRKSEETITPWNFEEVVDKQASQSFIERMTNFDKNLPNEKVLPK
 HSLLYEYFTVYNELTKVAVVTEGMKPKAFLSGEQKKAIVOLLFKTNRKUTVTKQKEDYFKKIECFDSVESQVEDRFNASLQTYHDLKKHKOKDFLDNEENEDILEONL
 TLLFEDREMIEERLKYAHLFODKVMKQLKRRRYTGWRLSRKLINGIRDKQSKTILDFLKSDFANRNFMLBDDSLTFKEDIQKAQVSGQGGSLHEHIANLAG
 SPAKKGILQTVKVVDELVKVMGRHKPENVIEMARENOTTOKGOKNSRERMKRIEKGKELQSKLKEHPVENTOLQNEKLYLYLONGRDMYVDQELDNRLSDVD
 VDAIVQSFLKDCSDNKKVLTNSDKNRCKSDNVPSSEVVKMKNYWRLLNAKLITQKFDNLTKAERGGLSELQKAGFIKROLVETRQITKHVAGILDNRMTKYDE
 NDKLIREVKVITLKSILVSDFRKDFQYKVRKINHYHHAHDAYLNAVOTALKKYPKLESEFYGYDYKVYDVVRKMKIAKSEGEIGKATAKYFFYSNNMNFKTEITLANG
 EIRKRLIETNGETGEIVWDKOROFATVRKVLSPQVNVKKTTEVOTGQFSKESILPKRNSOKLIARKADWDPPKKYGGFDSPTVAYSVLVAKVEKOKSKKLKSVKEL
 LGITMERSSEFKAIPIDFLEAKGVKEVKADLIKLPKYSLFELENGRKRMLASAGELQKGNELALPSAYVNFVLASHYEALKGSPEDNEQKOLFVECHKHVYLDEHED
 SEFSKRVILADANLDKVL SAYNKHGRDKPIREDAENIHFLTITNLGAPAAFKYFDITIDRKRYTSTKEVLOATLIHOSITGLYETRIDLSQIGGDIAGSKASPKKKKRVG
 RAIKPFEELRQALMPITLALVHQDPESLPFRQGVDFQITGIPDYFQVNSPNDLSTIKRKLDTGCVGEPHGVVDGNTMFNNAWLYNRKTSRVYKVCCKLSEVFEQI
 DPVNSLGYCCGGRKLEPSPQTLCCYGNQLCTHPNDATYYSQNRYPHCEKCFNEIGGESVSLGGDPSQPGQTHRKEQFSKRNDITLDPELFVECTEDGRKNHHCIVL
 IHEINPAGPVQDGGKKSARTKKNFTSAKRLPSTLCTGTFLENVNDPLRRGNHPSEGEVTVRVVHASQTVKPGNKKARTVDSGEMAESPTTKALPATEEID
 QVDLCFQNNHVSQSDCTFNNORRVYSYLSVHTTPNKLRTAYTHELUSYLEVKKLQYTIIGHWAGPTSEGQDYFHCHNFPDQKTPKRLGEWYNKAMLDK
 VSERIADVNDIFKQATEORLTSANELPYFEGDTPWVWGLSEKLEQEHEERKNEENTSNESIDVTKGDSKNNAKNNKNTSKNKSLSERGNKKKPGNPNVNSDLS
 QKLYATNENKHKEVFFVIRLIAGPAANSIPPIVDPDPLPDCIDMDGRDAFLTLARDNHLFESSLPRACQWSTNCHLVELHTQSQQPYDVPDYAS

FIG. 15C

cdCas9 Core (1645/1646 RRREE), (Addgene Plasmid 61359) amino acid sequence; 3X Flag Epitope
Nuclear Localization Sequence, *Streptococcus pyogenes* Cas9
 (1010A, 1840A), 3X Flag Epitope
"HA" Epitope (SEQ ID NO: 143)
 3X Flag Epitope

dCas9p300 Core (C1204R), (Addgene Plasmid 61361) amino acid sequence; **Flag Epitope**, **Nuclear Localization Sequence**, **Streptococcus pyogenes Cas9** (D10A, H840A), **Core**, **C1204R**, **"HA" Epitope** (SEQ ID NO: 144)

MDYKDHDGDKDHDYKDDDDMAPKKRKRVGRGMQDKKYSIGLIGTNSVGVAVITDEYKVPSSKKFKVLGNIDRSHKKNLIGALLFDSCGETAEATLKRITARRR
YTRRKNRDIYLGEPNSNEMAKVDDSPFHRLEESFLVEEDKKHERHPFGNINDEVAYHEKPYTYHLRKKLVDPSTDKADRLIYLALAHMKFRGHFLGCDLNPONSDV
DKLFIQLVQTYNQLFEENPINASGVDAKAILSARLSKSRRLNLIAGLPGEKKNGLFONLIJALSGLTPNFKSNFDLAEDAKIQLSKDTYDDDLNLLAQIGQQYADL
FLAAKNLSDAILLSCLRVTETKAPLSASMIKRYDEHHQDLTLAALVROQLPEKYKEFFDQSKNGYAGYIDGASQEEFYKFKPILKMDQTEELLVKLNREDLL
RKQRTFONGSIPHQHMLGELHAILRRQEDFYFPLKDAHEKIEKILYFRPYVVOPLARGNSRFAMNTRKSEETITPWNTEEVVDKGSASQSFIERMTNFDKXNLPNEKVL
PKHSLLYEYFTVYNELTKVKVVTGGRKPAFLSGEQKKAIVDLLFKTNRKVTVKQLKEDYFKKIECFDSVEISQVEDRFNASLGTYYHDLKKIKOKDFLOWEENEDILE
DIVLTLTFEDREMEERLKTYYAHLFDDKVMKOLKRRRYTOWGRLSRKLINGIRDKQSGKTILDFLKSDGPFANRNFMOIHDDSLTFKEDIQKAGVSGOGDLSHEHA
NLAGSPAIKKGILOTVKVVDDELVKVMGRHKPENIVEMARENGTQKGOKNSRERNMKRIEKGKELGSOILKEHPVENTOLQNEKLYLYLQNGRDMYVDGELDNR
LSDYDVAIVPQSLADDSIDNKVLTRSKNRGKSDNVPSEEVKKMKNVWRQLLNAKLTORKFDNLTKAERGOLSELDKAGFKROLVETROITKHVAOILDSRM
NTKYDENDALIREVKVITLKSCLVSDFRKDFQFYKVRRENNYHHA DAYLNAVVGTAALKKYPALSEFVYGDYKVVYDVRKMKIAKSEGEIQAKATKYFFYSNMNFFKT
EITLANGEIRKRPLIETNGETGEIIVWDKGRDFAIVRKVLSMPQVNIYKATEVOTGQFSKESILPKARNSDKLIARKKDWDPKVKYGGFDSPTVAYSVLVAAKVEKQKSK
KLKSVNELLGITIMERSSEFFENNPIDFLKAGYKEVKKOLIKLPKYSLSFELENGRKRMLASAGELQKGNELALPSKYVNFYLASHYEKLKQSPEDNECKQLFVECHK
HYLDEHEQISEFSKRVILADANLDKVL SAYNKHROKPIREOAENIHFLTILNLGAPAAFKYFDTTIDRKRYTSTKEVLDATLHQSIITGLYETRIDLSQLGGDPIAGSKAS
PKKKRKVGRAKKFEELRQACNPTLEALTRQDFLESCHFRQVDPGQIGIPYFDNKSNDLSITKKKEDITGGYGEFNGQVDDNENENANLNNKTSRWYKYCS
KLSEVTEGEIOPVMSLGYCGGRKLETSPTLQCYCHQLTIPNDATYYSQNNYTHPCENRNEIGSESYSLODDPSQPTQTNKKGQSNRKNQTLDPFLVECTEC
GRKANHQCLVHHEHNPAGVDDCKKSAATNKKENHSSAKNLPSTRLGTFLENRVNDLFRKQNFESGCTVAVVHASSQNTVEVKGQSNRKNQTLDPFLVECTEC
RTKALFAFEEDQVDCFFGNNHVOEYQSDCRRPNQRKVSGLDSVHFRPKCLRTAVYHEELGYLEYVKKLGYYTGHIMACPPSEGDDYFHCHPSQOKEPKPKRL
DEWYKKNLDKAVSERVHDKQIFRQAIEDRLTSAKELPYFEGDFWPNVLEESINELQEEEEENKREENTSNESIDVTITGDSKNNAKMKNNKFTSKNKSLSRGNK
KKPGMPNVSNDLSQKLYATMEKHNKEVFTVIRIAGPAANSIPWDPDPLIPCDLNDGRDAFLILARDKHLIEFSSLRRAQWSTNCHMLVELHTQSDIDPYDVPDYAS

FIG. 15F

dCas9³⁰⁰ Core (Y1467F): (Addgene Plasmid 61362) amino acid sequence: **XX** **Flag** **Epitope**, **Nuclear Localization Sequence**, **Streptococcus pyogenes** Cas9 (D19A, H240A), **300 Core Epitope**, **Y1467F**, **"HA" Epitope** (SEQ ID NO: 145)

**MDYKHGGDYKHDDYDKDDDDKMAPKKKRVGRGMDDKYYSGIGAIGTNSVGVNAVITDEYKVPKSKFKVVLONTDRHSKKKNGALLGDSQETAEATRLKRTARR
RYTRRKARICYLOEFSNEMAKVDDSFHRLLEESFLVEEDKKHERHPFGNVDEVAHYEKYPTVHLRKKLVOSTDKADLRLLYLALAHMKFRGFLIEGOLNPONS
DVCKLFQOLVQTYNQLFEENPINASOVDAKAILSARLSKSRRLLENLAQLPCEKKNGLFGNLLALSGLTPNFKSNFDLAEDAKLQLSKDTYDDDLNALLAQIGDQY
ADFLAAKNLSOAILLSOILRVNTEITKAPLSASMKRYDEHROOLTLKALVRQOLPEKYKEIFDQSKNGYAGYIDGASQEEFYKFKPILEKMDGTIELLVKLNK
EDLLRKQRTFDNGSPHQHILGELHAILRRQGEFYPLKDNREKIEKILTRIPYYVGLARGNSRFAWMTRKSEETTPWNFEVVOKGASQSFERMTNFQKNLP
NEVLPKHSLLYEYFTVYNELTKVKVYTEOMRKPAFLSGEQKKAIVDILLFKTRKVTVKOLKEDYFKKIECFDSVEISGVEORFNASLGTYHDLKKHKOKDFLDNEE
NEEDLEDIVLTLLFEDREMEERLKYAHLFDDKVMKOLKRRRYTGWORLSRKLNGRCKQSKTILDFLKSDFANRPMQLHDDSLTFKEDIQKACQVSQGD
SLHEHANLAGSPAIAKKGILQTVKVVDELVKVMGRHKPENIVEMARENQTTQKQKNSRERMAREEGIKELQSOILKEHPVENTQLONEKLYLYLQNGROMVVD
QELQNRLSDYOVDAIVPOSFLKDDSDNKVLTRSDKNRCKSONVPEEVKKMKNYWROLINAKLITORKFONLTKAERGOLSELQKAGFKRQLVETRQITKHV
AQILDSRMNTKYDENDKLIREVKVITLKSILVSDFRKDFQFYKVREINNVHHAHDAYLNAVVGITALIKKYPKLESEFVYGDYKVVYDVRKMAKSEQEGKATAKYFF
YGNMNFKTEITLANGEIRKRLPIETNGETGEIVWDKGRDFATVRKVLSPQVNVKNTVQTOGFSKESILPKRNSDKLIARKKDWDPKKYGGFDSPTVAYSVLV
VAKVEKQSKKLLKSVKELLGITMERSFEKNIPIDFLKAGYKEVKADLIKLPKYSLSFELENGRKRMLASAGELQKQNELALPSKYVNFYLYASHYEALKQSPEDN
EQKQLFVEQHKHYLDEHEQISEFSKRVILADANLQKVL SAYNKHROKPIREQAENHILFTLTNLGAPAAFKYFOTTERKRYTSTKEVLDATLNOSITGLYETRIOLS
OLGGDPIAGSKASPKKKRVGRAKFEELRGALNPTLEALTRQDPESLPERQVNDPQLIGSDVEDKSKNSQLSTIKRKLDTQYQEEVQVQVDDNLNENNNNN
VNRKTSRVVYTESKISEVEEETQPVANGSLGYCCGRKLEFSPQILCCYGRKGLCTIPRDATYYSYGNRYHFFCEKCFNEIGESVSLGDDPSQPTTHKQFSKK
XDTLDPELFVECTEGGRKMHQICVCHHEIWPAGFYCDGCLNKSAMTRKNEKPSAKRLPSIRLQITLENRYNDFLRRGNHPESEGEVTVRWVWASDKTVEKPGMK
ARFVDSGENAESPPRTKALTAFEEIDGVOLCHTGMHVDYGSQPPHNGRNVHSYLDSSVHPTTPKQLTJAYTHEILIGYLEVNNKLGTYTTOHNAQPTSEGGDY
THCHPPQGNPKPKKRLQSEVFNKNDKAVSERNHQYKQTKGATEDNLTSAKELPYTEGQFWPVLFSKIELEQEEFERKREENTSNESITDTKGSNNARKKK
NKTSTKNLSLSSEGNKKKPCGMPNVSNDLSQLYATHEKKKEVFVRSLAGPAAVSLPRVDDDLPRCDLNDGROAFLTAROKHLEESSRRAQNSITNCLM
LHTQSGQYPPYDVDPDYAS**

FIG. 15G

Nim-dCas9^{VP64}; amino acid sequence (Addgene Plasmid #48676)⁷; *Neisseria meningitidis* Cas9 (D16A, D567A, H588A, N611A), Nuclear Localization Sequence, **SR** (SEQ ID NO: 148)

MAAFKPNPNVYLGLAIGIASVGVWAMVEIDEDEENPICLDLGVRVFERAEVPKTGOSLAMARRLARSVRRLTRRRRAHRLLRARRLLKREGVLQAADFDENGLIKSL
LPNTPWQLRAAALDRKLTPLWLSAVLLHLKHRGYLSQRKNEGETADKELGALLKQVADNAHALQTGDFTPAELALNKFESCHRNQRCDYSHTFSRKDLQ
LQAEILLFEKQKEFGNPHVSGGLKEGIELLMTQRPALSGDAVQKMLGHCITFEPAEKAAKNTYTAERFWLTKLNNLRILEOGSERPLDTERATLMDEPYRKS
KSKLTYYAQAARKLLGLEDTAFFKGLRYGKQNAEASTLMEMKAYHAISRALEKEGLKSKPLNSPELODEIGTAFSLFKTDEDTGRLLKORIGPEILEALLKHISF
OKFVQISLKALRRIVPLMEQCKRYDEACAEIYGDKKNTTEKIYLPPIADEIRNPVLRALSQARKVINGVRRYQSPARIHETAREVGSFKORKEIEKRQGE
ENRKOREKAAAKFREYFPNPFVGEPSKDKILKLRLYEQOHGKCLYSCKENLGRNKGVEIAAALPFSRTWDDSFNNKVLVLGSEAQNKQKQNTPYEYFNQKID
NSREWQEFKARVETSRFPFRSKKQRIILLQKDFDEQFKERNLNDTRYVNRFLCOFVADRMRLTKCKKKRVFASNGQITNLLRCFWGLRKVRAENDRHHALDAVV
VACSTVAMQOKITRFVRYKEMNAFDGKTIDKETGEVLHOKTHFPQWPEFFAOEVMRVFGKPOGKPEFEEADTPEKLRLLAEKLSRSPAEAVHEYVTPLFVSRA
PNRKMSGGQHMETYKSAKRLDEGVSVLRVPLTQKLKDKLEKMNREPERKLYEALKARLEAHKDDPAKAFAPFYKYOKAGNRTQOVKAVRVEQVQKTOV
WVRNHNIGIADNATMVRVDVFEKGDKYLLVPYISWQVAKGILPORAVVQCKDEEDWQIDDSFNFKFSLHPNDLVEVITKKARMFQYFASCHRGTONNIRIHDL
DHKIGKNGILEGIGVKTALSFKYQIDELGKEIRPCRLKKRPPVRSRADPKKKRKKVEAS

Nim-dCas9³⁰⁰ Core; (Addgene Plasmid 61365) amino acid sequence; *Neisseria meningitidis* Cas9 (D16A, D567A, H588A, N611A), Nuclear Localization Sequence, **SR** (SEQ ID NO: 149)

MAAFKPNPNVYLGLAIGIASVGVWAMVEIDEDEENPICLDLGVRVFERAEVPKTGOSLAMARRLARSVRRLTRRRRAHRLLRARRLLKREGVLQAADFDENGLIKSL
LPNTPWQLRAAALDRKLTPLWLSAVLLHLKHRGYLSQRKNEGETADKELGALLKQVADNAHALQTGDFTPAELALNKFESCHRNQRCDYSHTFSRKDLQ
AELLILFEKQKEFGNPHVSGGLKEGIELLMTQRPALSGDAVQKMLGHCITFEPAEKAAKNTYTAERFWLTKLNNLRILEOGSERPLDTERATLMDEPYRKS
LTYAQAARKLLGLEDTAFFKGLRYGKQNAEASTLMEMKAYHAISRALEKEGLKSKPLNSPELODEIGTAFSLFKTDEDTGRLLKORIGPEILEALLKHISFQK
QISLKALRRIVPLMEQCKRYDEACAEIYGDKKNTTEKIYLPPIADEIRNPVLRALSQARKVINGVRRYQSPARIHETAREVGSFKORKEIEKRQGEENRK
DREKAAAKFREYFPNPFVGEPSKDKILKLRLYEQOHGKCLYSCKENLGRNKGVEIAAALPFSRTWDDSFNNKVLVLGSEAQNKQKQNTPYEYFNQKIDNSRE
WQEFKARVETSRFPFRSKKQRIILLQKDFDEQFKERNLNDTRYVNRFLCOFVADRMRLTKCKKKRVFASNGQITNLLRCFWGLRKVRAENDRHHALDAVVVACS
TVAMQOKITRFVRYKEMNAFDGKTIDKETGEVLHOKTHFPQWPEFFAOEVMRVFGKPOGKPEFEEADTPEKLRLLAEKLSRSPAEAVHEYVTPLFVSRA
MSQOQHMETYKSAKRLDEGVSVLRVPLTQKLKDKLEKMNREPERKLYEALKARLEAHKDDPAKAFAPFYKYOKAGNRTQOVKAVRVEQVQKTOVWVRNH
NGIADNATMVRVDVFEKGDKYLLVPYISWQVAKGILPORAVVQCKDEEDWQIDDSFNFKFSLHPNDLVEVITKKARMFQYFASCHRGTONNIRIHDLHKIGKN
GILEGIGVKTALSFKYQIDELGKEIRPCRLKKRPPVRSRADPKKKRKKVEASGRAP

ESTIRKLDIGTQGTQEPNQYVDNLMFNHAWLYNKKTSRVWYUSKLSVEFEQIDPYNQSLGYGCKNLEPSPQTLQCKQLCHPRNDATYYSYQNYHPC
KCRNEIGCESUSLGDPSQGTTHNKEQFSKKNQDTLOPELVECTECGRNKHQICVLHHEINPAGVCDGCLKSKARTNKNKTSANRLPQNLGTLERNV
DELRSQNHPESEGVTVRVVHASDKTYEVKPGMKARFVDSGENAESPYRTKALFAFEEIDGVLCFTQNMHVQEGYSGDPPNQRRVYSYLSVSHVHFRPKCLR
AVYTHEILGYLEYVKNLGYTTTCHWACPPSGDDYFHCCHPPDOKPKPKRLQEWYKKNLDKAVSERIVHDYDFKQATEDRUTSAKELPYFEGDFWPNVLEES
KELEOESEERRRENTSNESTDTYKGDKNNAKKNKNTSKNKSLSKSLKAPGNFVNSDLCKEYATHEKNKHEVFTVIRLQAPAAANSLPFWDDPPLP
DLNDGRDAFLTASQKHLPESSLAPRAQWSTAGNLYVEUATQSSQYTPYDVPDPAAS

FIG. 15J

ICAM1 ZF^{VP4} amino acid sequence: 3X Flag Epitope, Nuclear Localization Sequence, Zinc Finger Helix, 300 Core Emitter, "HA" Epitope (SEQ ID NO: 150)

MDYKDHGGDYKDHDDYKDDDDKMAPKKRKRKVGRCMAQAALPEGKPYACPEGKSFSDCKDLAKHQRTHTGEKPYKCECGKSFSSDGLVHQRTHTGEK
PYKCECGKSFSSDGLVHQRTHTGEKPYACPEGKSFSSDGLVHQRTHTGEKPYKCECGKSFSSDGLVHQRTHTGEKPYKCECGKSFSSDGLVHQRTHTGEK
HQRTHTGKKTSGQAGQASPKKKRKRKVGRA

ICAM1 ZF³⁰⁰ Core amino acid sequence: 3X Flag Epitope, Nuclear Localization Sequence, Zinc Finger Helix, 300 Core Emitter, "HA" Epitope (SEQ ID NO: 151)

MDYKDHGGDYKDHDDYKDDDDKMAPKKRKRKVGRCMAQAALPEGKPYACPEGKSFSDCKDLAKHQRTHTGEKPYKCECGKSFSSDGLVHQRTHTGEK
PYKCECGKSFSSDGLVHQRTHTGEKPYACPEGKSFSSDGLVHQRTHTGEKPYKCECGKSFSSDGLVHQRTHTGEKPYKCECGKSFSSDGLVHQRTHTGEK
HQRTHTGKKTSGQAGQASPKKKRKRKVGRA

MFNNAMLYNRKTSRVYKYSKLSLVFEQEDIPVHQSLGYCCGRKLEFSPTLCCYGGKQDTPRQATVYSQNRNTHFCCKFNEIQGESVSLGDDPSQPTTH
KEQFSNRKNDTLDPELVECTEDGRKNNHQVCHHEINPAGFVDDGLKKSARTRKENKFSKRLPSIRLSTHLENRVNDFLRQNHHPESGEVTVNVVHASSD
TWEVNPGRKARPYDSGEMAEFTPTNALFAFEEDGVGLQFFQGMHYQRYGSDCPRPAGRRVSYLDSVHFRPKCLRTAVYHGLGLYLEVYVWGLGTTQNM
ACPPSEGGDYPFHCHRPDQKPKRLQENYKMMDKKASERNHQKDFKQATEORLTSKELPTEGGDWPWVVEESKELFOSESEKREENTSESTDV
KGDSSKNAKKNNKKTSSKKNKSSLRGNNKKPKPMFNVNSDLSSKLYATNEKKKEVFEVRLAGPAANSIPNTDPTDIPCDLMDGRDAPLTLARKKHLEFSSL
RAQWSITNCHLVELHTQSQQPYDVPDYAS

FIG. 16

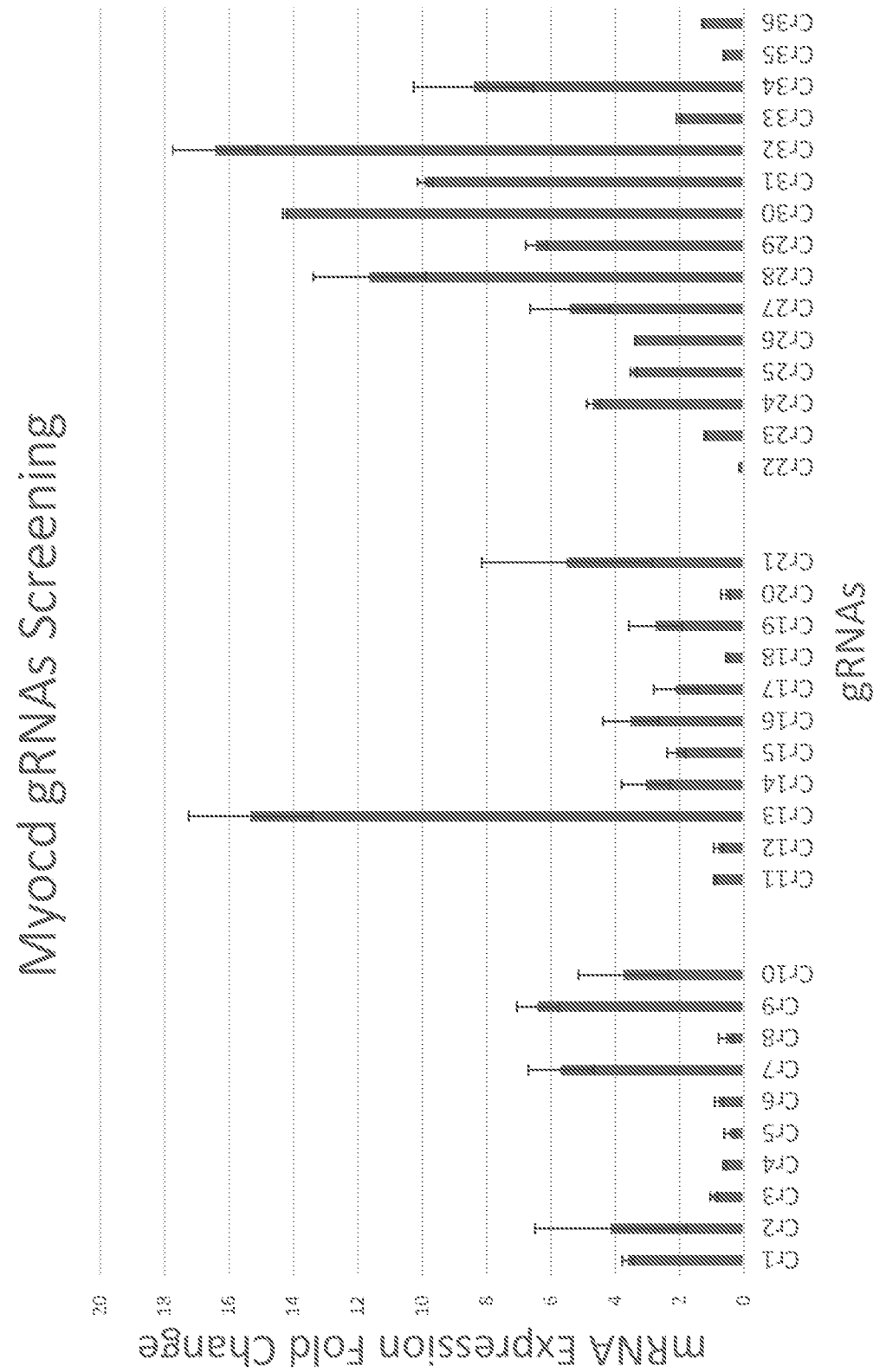


FIG. 17

gRNAs Combinations Activation

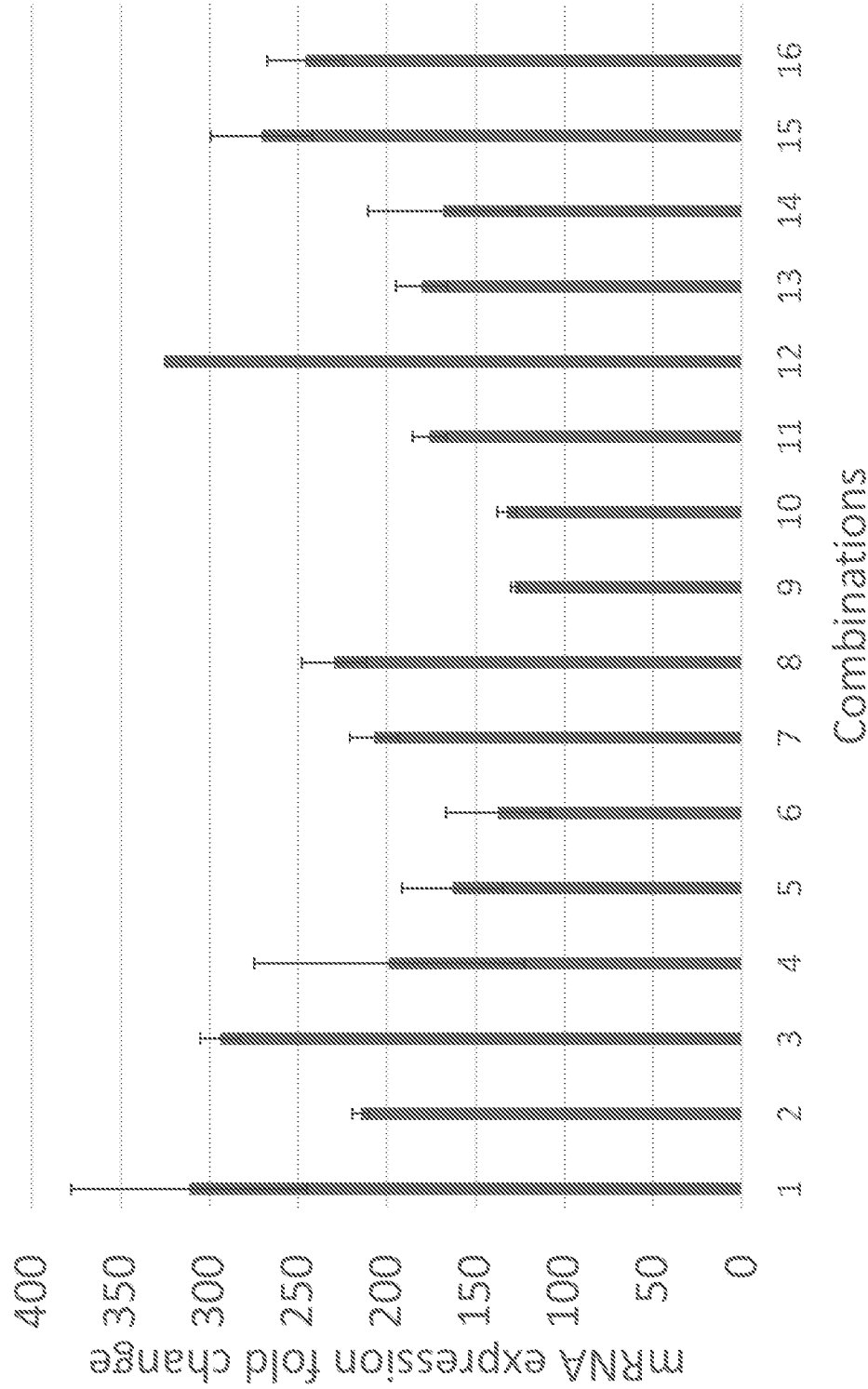


FIG. 18

p300 and dual VP64 transfection in 293Ts

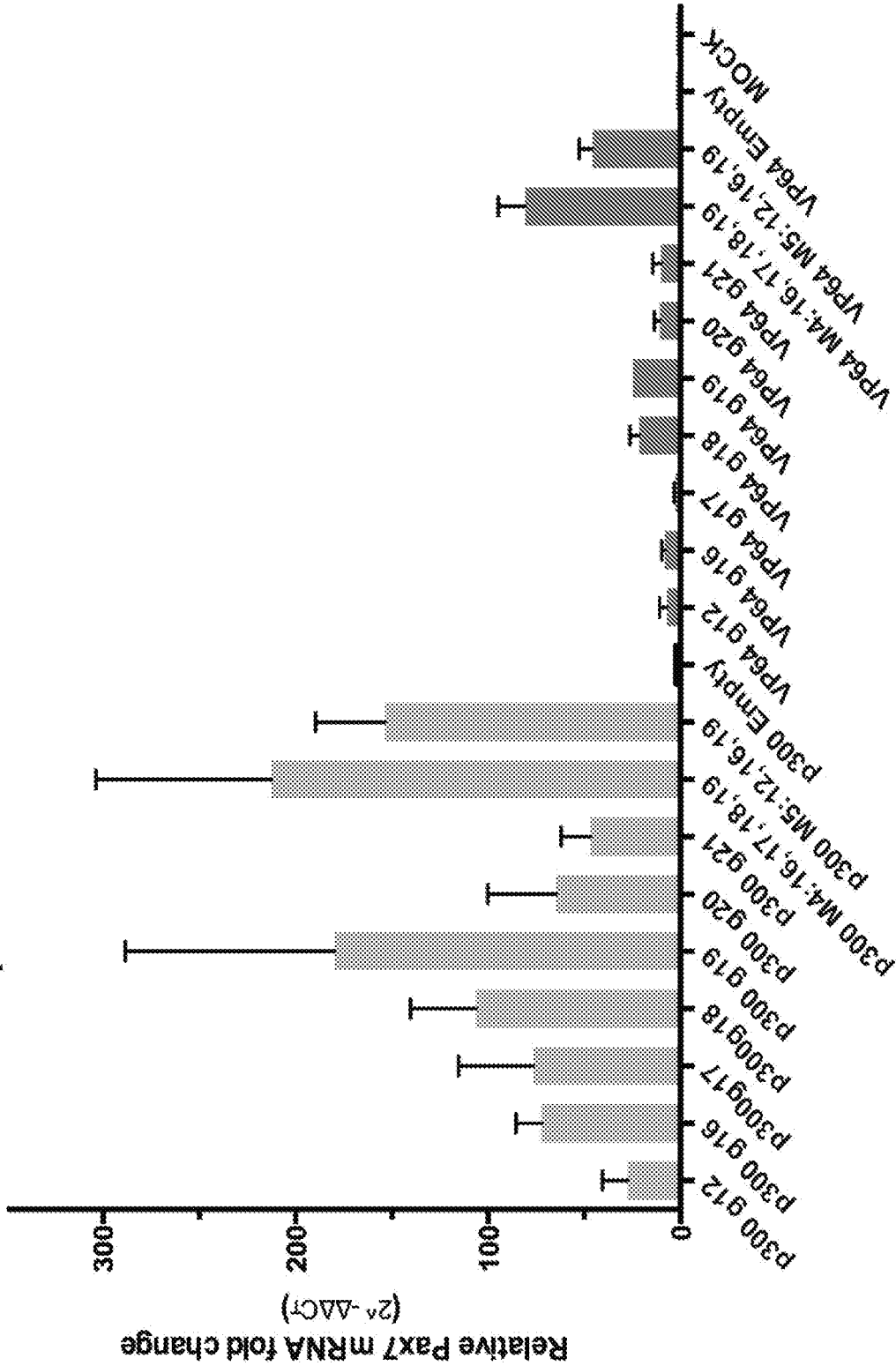


FIG. 19

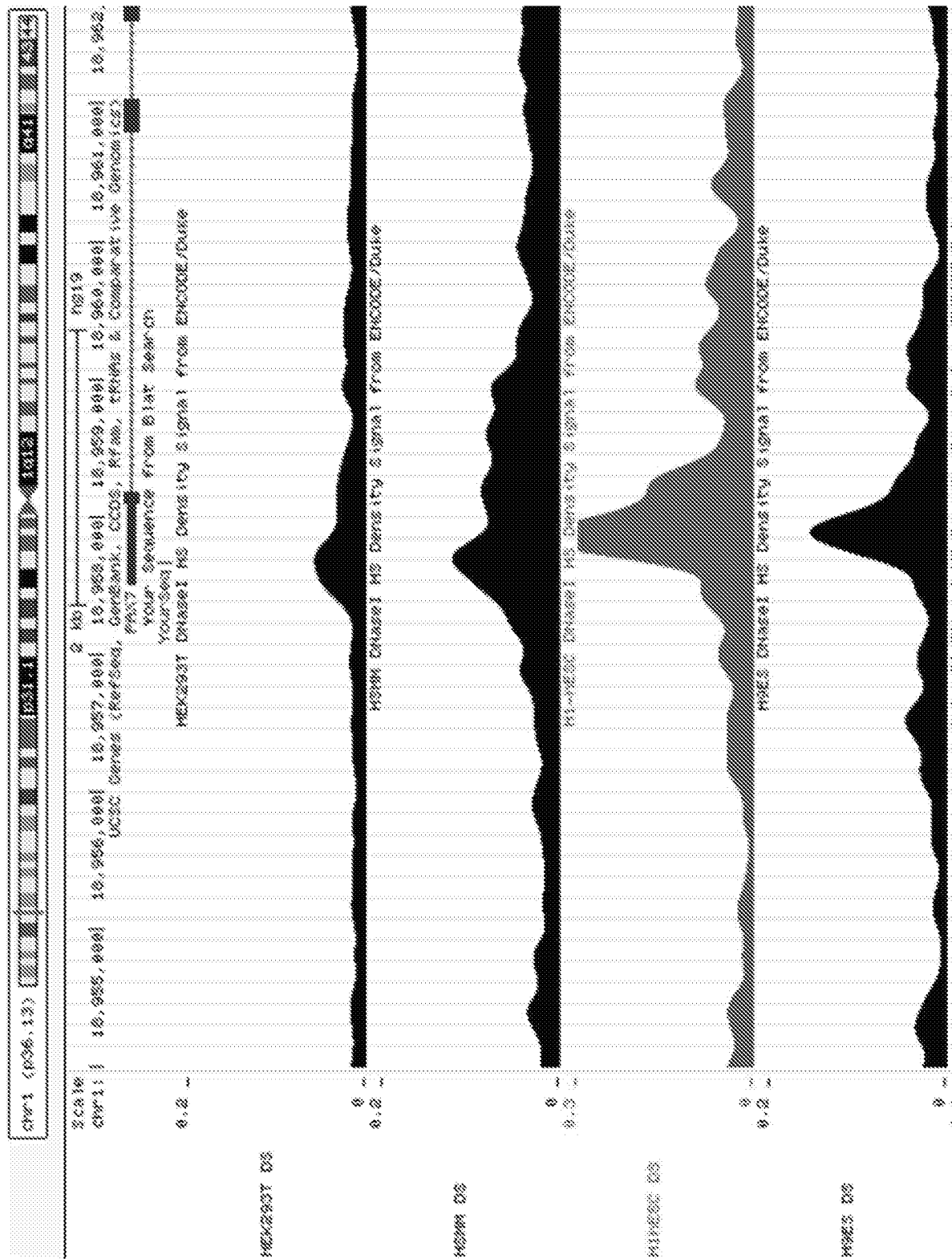
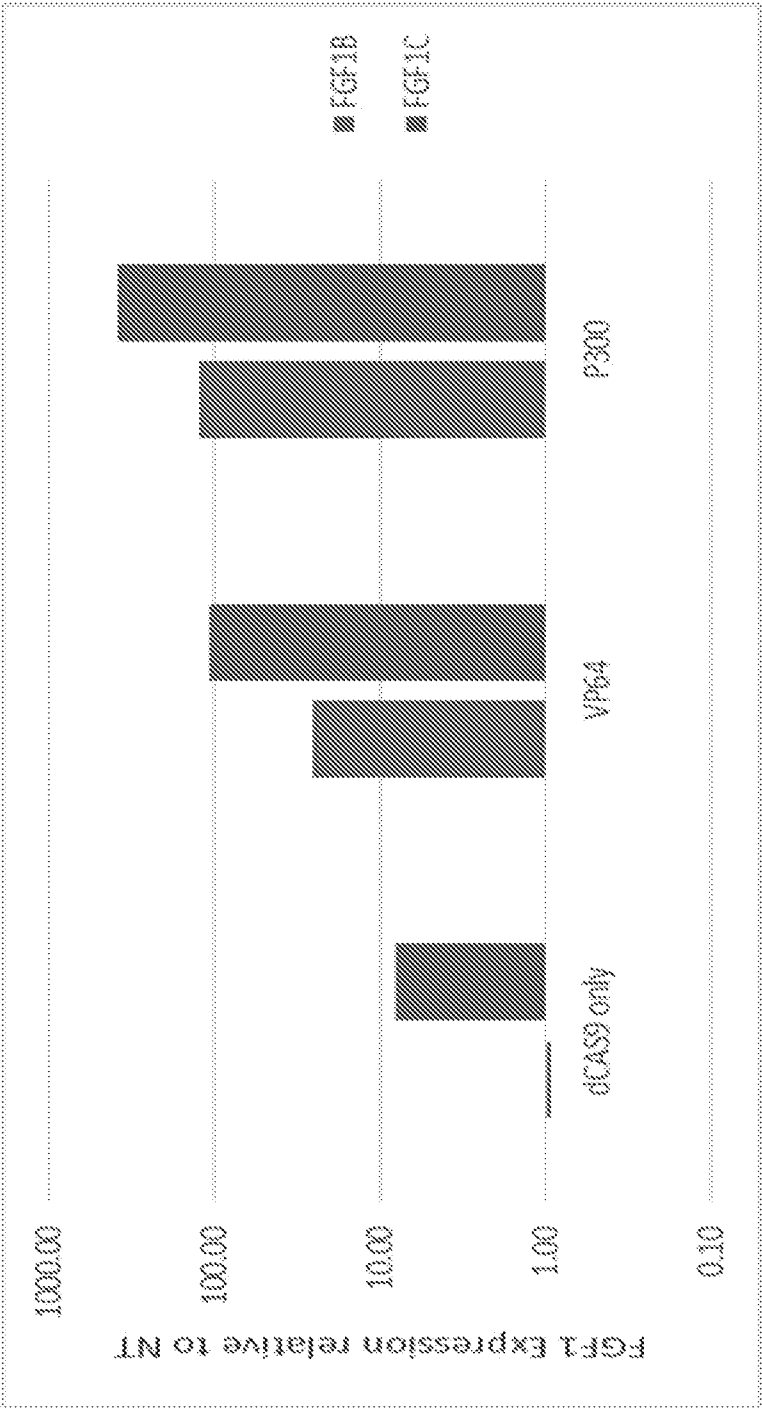


FIG. 20

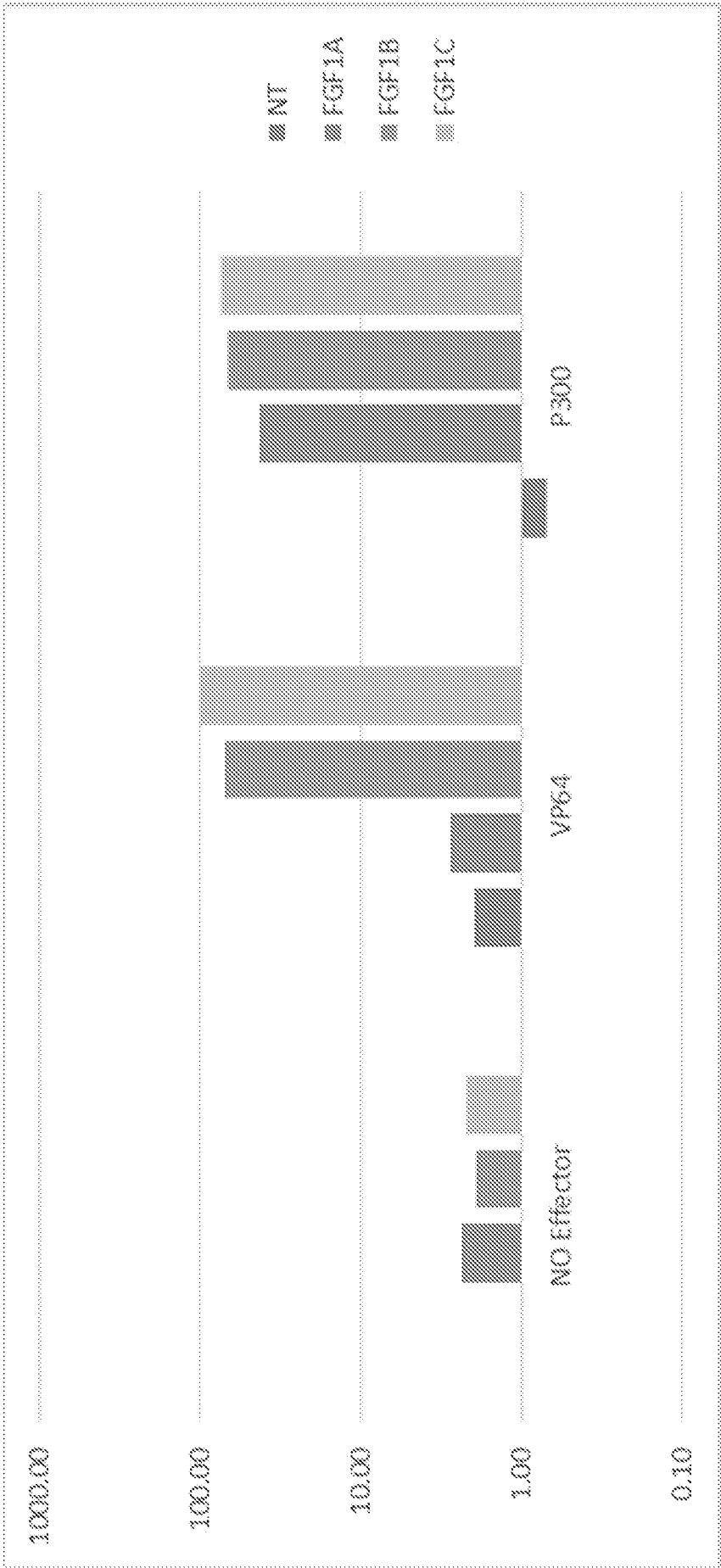


FIG. 21



RQ	FGF1B	FGF1C
dCAS9 only	0.94	8.11
VP64	25.50	107.54
P300	125.29	388.36

FIG. 22



Row Labels	NT	FGF1A	FGF1B	FGF1C
NO Effector				
VP64	1.98	2.38	1.93	2.19
P300	0.71	42.87	67.00	73.00

FIG. 23