Supporting information for

An Esterase-activated Click and Release Approach to Metalfree CO-prodrugs

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1. Synthetic procedure for the CO prodrugs

General information

All reagents and solvents were of reagent grade. Column chromatography was carried out using flash silica gel (Sorbent 230–400 mesh) and P-2 Gel (Bio-Gel, particle size range 45- 90 μ m). TLC analysis was conducted on silica gel plates (Sorbent Silica G UV254). NMR spectra were recorded at 400 MHz for ¹H and 100 MHz for ¹³C on an Avance Bruker instrument. Chemical shifts (δ values) and coupling constants (J values) are given in ppm and hertz, respectively, using the respective solvent (¹H NMR, ¹³C NMR) as the internal reference.



Scheme S1. Synthetic route to esterase sensitive CO prodrugs. Reagents and conditions: a) imidazole, DMF, TBDPSCl, r.t., 90%; b) NaH, MOMCl, DMF, 0 °C-r.t., 90%; c) *n*-BuLi, TMEDA, r.t., 1h, then EtOCOCl, -78 °C-r.t., 78%; d) CBr₄, *i*-PrOH, reflux, 70%; e) DIAD, PPh₃, THF, 0 °C-r.t., 75-76%; f) 10% HCl, THF/H₂O, r.t., 82-84%; g) KOH, MeOH/H₂O; then Ac₂O, reflux, 70-74%; h) TBAF, THF, r.t., 85-90%; i) Jones' reagent, acetone/H₂O, 0 °C-r.t., 65-68%; j) EDC, DMAP, r.t., 73-75%; k) amines, TMSCl, chlorobenzene, reflux, 70-75%; l) Et₃N, THF/MeOH, r.t.; then Ac₂O, H₂SO₄, 60-68%; m) 5% DMSO/PBS, porcine liver esterase (10 U/mL), 37 °C.

Synthesis of compound 2

Compound **1** (2.0 g, 14.5 mmol) and imidazole (1.5 g, 21.7 mmol) were dissolved in anhydrous DMF (10 mL) under N₂. Then TBDPSCl (4.2 g, 15.2 mmol) was added dropwise at room temperature. The resulting mixture was stirred for another 1 h at room temperature. Then the mixture was poured into water, and extracted with ethyl acetate (3 × 40 mL). The obtained organic layer was dried over anhydrous Na₂SO₄. After filtration and concentration, the residue was triturated with hexane, and the formed precipitate was filtered as the title compound **2**. Yield: 90%. ¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ 8.16 (s, 1H), 7.66 (d, *J* = 6.8 Hz, 4H), 7.51 – 7.39 (m, 6H), 7.24 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 7.05 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 2H), 6.90 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 3.92 (t, *J* = 5.2 Hz, 2H), 2.98 (t, *J* = 5.2 Hz, 2H), 1.13 (s, 9H). ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃): δ 155.8, 135.6, 132.0, 130.9, 130.1, 128.4, 127.9, 126.9, 120.4, 117.1, 66.8, 35.1, 26.7, 18.9. HRMS (ESI) [M+Na]⁺ calcd. for C₂₄H₂₈O₂SiNa 399.1756, found 399.1744.

Synthesis of compound 3

To a solution of compound **2** (1.5 g, 4 mmol) in dry DMF (25 mL) at 0 °C was added NaH (191 mg, 4.8 mmol) portion wise. Then the resulting mixture was stirred at 0 °C for another 0.5 h, followed by the dropwise addition of MOMCI (480 mg, 6 mmol). The resulting mixture was stirred for another 4 h at room temperature. The reaction mixture was poured into ice-water, and extracted with ethyl acetate (3×40 mL). The obtained organic layer was washed with brine, and dried over anhydrous Na₂SO₄. After filtration and concentration, the obtained residue was purified on a silica gel column to afford compound **3** as a colorless oil (yield: 90%). ¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ 7.76 – 7.61 (m, 4H), 7.54 – 7.37 (m, 6H), 7.28 – 7.20 (m, 2H), 7.17 – 7.06 (m, 1H), 6.99 (td, *J* = 7.4, 1.1 Hz, 1H), 5.14 (s, 2H), 3.96 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 2H), 3.40 (s, 3H), 3.05 (t, *J* = 7.2Hz, 2H), 1.13 (s, 9H). ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃): δ 155.4, 135.6, 134.0, 131.4, 129.5, 127.6, 127.5, 121.4, 113.6, 94.1, 63.8, 55.9, 34.1, 26.8, 19.2. HRMS (ESI) [M+Na]⁺ calcd. for C₂₆H₃₂O₃SiNa 443.2025, found 443.2018.

Synthesis of compound 4

To a solution of compound **3** (1.0 g, 2.4 mmol) in anhydrous THF (30 mL) at 0 °C was added TMEDA (417 mg, 3.6 mmol), followed by the dropwise addition of *n*-BuLi (1.8 mL, 3.6 mmol, 2M in hexane) under N₂. The resulting solution was stirred for another 1 h at room temperature. The obtained brownish solution was cooled to -78 °C, followed by dropwise addition of ethyl chloroformate (520 mg, 4.8 mmol). A white precipitate was formed immediately. The resulting mixture was stirred with temperature slowly warming to room temperature (around 1 h). Then the reaction mixture was poured into saturated solution of NH₄Cl, and extracted with ethyl acetate (3 × 40 mL). The combined organic layer was dried over anhydrous Na₂SO₄. After filtration and concentration, the obtained residue was purified on a silica gel column to afford compound **4** as a colorless oil (yield: 78%).

¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ 7.74 (dd, J = 7.6, 1.6 Hz, 1H), 7.64 (dd, J = 8.0, 1.6 Hz, 4H), 7.49 – 7.33 (m, 7H), 7.10 (t, J = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 5.03 (s, 2H), 4.40 (q, J = 7.2 Hz, 2H), 3.95 (t, J = 6.8 Hz, 2H), 3.54 (s, 3H), 3.06 (t, J = 6.8 Hz, 2H), 1.43 (t, J = 7.1 Hz, 3H), 1.07 (s, 9H). ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃): δ 166.4, 156.2, 135.6, 135.4, 133.9, 133.8, 129.7, 129.6, 127.6, 124.9, 123.6, 101.4, 63.8, 61.0, 57.4, 33.7, 26.9, 19.2, 14.3. HRMS (ESI) [M+Na]⁺ calcd. for C₂₉H₃₆O₅SiNa 515.2238, found 515.2230.

Synthesis of compound 5

A solution of compound **4** (500 mg, 1.0 mmol) and CBr_4 (497 mg, 1.5 mmol) in isopropanol (20 mL) was heated under reflux for 3 h. Then the reaction mixture was dried, and purified on a silica gel column to afford compound **5** as a colorless oil (yield: 70%).

¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ 10.99 (s, 1H), 7.75 (dd, J = 8.0, 1.7 Hz, 1H), 7.69 – 7.56 (m, 4H), 7.50 – 7.31 (m, 7H), 6.80 (t, J = 7.7 Hz, 1H), 4.43 (q, J = 7.1 Hz, 2H), 3.92 (t, J = 6.7 Hz, 2H), 2.96 (t, J = 6.7 Hz, 2H), 1.44 (t, J = 7.1 Hz, 3H), 1.04 (s, 9H). ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃): δ 170.6, 160.1, 137.2, 135.6, 133.9, 129.5, 128.0, 127.6, 127.4, 118.3, 112.1, 62.9, 61.3, 33.3, 26.9, 19.2, 14.3. HRMS (ESI) [M+Na]⁺ calcd. for C₂₇H₃₂O₄SiNa 471.1968, found 471.1984.

General procedure for the synthesis of compound 6a-b

To a solution of compound **5** (1 equiv.), substituted alcohol (1.5 equiv.) and PPh₃ (1.5 equiv.) in dry THF under N₂ was added DIAD (1.5 equiv.) dropwise at 0 °C. The resulting solution was stirred at room temperature overnight. The reaction mixture was poured into water, and extracted with ethyl acetate (3×40 mL). The combined organic layer was dried over anhydrous Na₂SO₄. After filtration and concentration, the residue was purified on a silica gel column to afford compound **6a/6b** as a pale-yellow oil. **6a** (yield: 75%). ¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ 7.77 (dd, J = 7.8, 1.8 Hz, 1H), 7.71 – 7.56 (m, 4H), 7.49 – 7.34 (m, 7H), 7.10 (t, J = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 4.91 (t, J = 5.6 Hz, 1H), 4.40 (q, J = 7.2 Hz, 2H), 4.10 – 3.79 (m, 4H), 3.39 (dt, J = 13.3, 6.5 Hz, 1H), 2.87 (dt, J = 13.7, 6.9 Hz, 1H), 1.44 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 3H), 1.07 (s, 9H), 0.94 (s, 9H), 0.14 (s, 3H), 0.13 (s, 3H), 0.08 (s, 9H). ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃): δ 166.6, 155.2, 135.7, 135.6, 135.2, 135.1, 133.9, 133.8, 129.9, 129.5, 127.7, 127.6, 125.4, 123.6, 101.8, 93.2, 75.0, 65.7, 63.9, 60.9, 33.7, 26.9, 25.9, 19.2, 18.4, 14.3, -0.4, -5.2, -5.2. HRMS (ESI) [M+H]⁺ calcd. for C₄₀H₅₈O₅Si₃Na 725.3490, found 725.3500.

6b (yield: 76%). ¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ 7.65 – 7.61 (m, 5H), 7.48 – 7.32 (m, 8H), 7.02 (t, J = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 4.38 (q, J = 6.8 Hz, 2H), 4.16 – 4.03 (m, 1H), 3.91 – 3.72 (m, 3H), 3.59 (dd, J = 10.2, 5.9 Hz, 1H), 3.08 – 2.95 (m, 2H), 1.41 (t, J = 7.1 Hz, 3H), 1.23 (d, J = 6.2 Hz, 3H), 1.05 (s, 9H), 0.86 (s, 9H), 0.02 (s, 6H). ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃): δ 167.2, 155.7, 135.6, 134.8, 134.1, 133.9, 129.5, 127.6, 125.0, 122.6, 81.0, 66.1, 63.8, 60.9, 33.4, 26.8, 25.8, 21.6, 19.2, 18.2, 16.9, 14.3, -5.4. HRMS (ESI) [M+H]⁺ calcd. for C₃₆H₅₂O₅Si₂ Na 643.3251, found 643.3243.

General procedure for the synthesis of 7a-b

To a solution of **6a/6b** (6 mmol) in THF (30 mL) was added 10% HCl (5 mL), and the resulting solution was stirred for 3 h at room temperature. The reaction mixture was extracted with ethyl acetate. The combine organic layer was washed with NaHCO₃ solution and brine successively, and was dried over anhydrous Na₂SO₄. After filtration

and concentration, the residue was purified on a silica gel column to afford compound **6a/6b** as a colorless oil.

7a (Yield: 82%). ¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ 7.79 (dd, J = 7.8, 1.8 Hz, 1H), 7.65 (dd, J = 7.9, 1.5 Hz, 2H), 7.60 (dd, J = 8.0, 1.5 Hz, 2H), 7.49 – 7.33 (m, 7H), 7.12 (t, J = 7.7 Hz, 1H), 4.86 (dd, J = 6.3, 3.9 Hz, 1H), 4.42 – 4.35 (m, 2H), 3.99 – 3.81 (m, 4H), 3.48 – 3.36 (m, 2H), 2.89 – 2.82 (m, 1H), 1.41 (t, J = 7.1 Hz, 3H), 1.05 (s, 9H), 0.08 (s, 9H). ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃): δ 166.5, 155.6, 135.6, 135.5, 135.1, 133.7, 133.7, 129.9, 129.6, 129.6, 127.7, 127.6, 124.8, 123.9, 100.2, 94.4, 75.6, 65.6, 63.9, 61.3, 34.2, 26.8, 19.2, 14.3, -0.5. HRMS (ESI) [M+H]⁺ calcd. for C₃₄H₄₄O₅Si₂Na 611.2625, found 611.2635.

7b (Yield: 84%). ¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ 7.71 (d, J = 7.8 Hz, 1H), 7.65 – 7.60 (m, 4H), 7.50 – 7.32 (m, 7H), 7.08 (t, J = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 4.48 – 4.34 (m, 2H), 4.25 – 4.09 (m, 1H), 3.95 – 3.86 (m, 2H), 3.74 (d, J = 11.8 Hz, 1H), 3.60 (dd, J = 11.9, 5.6 Hz, 1H), 3.09 – 2.89 (m, 2H), 1.41 (t, J = 7.0 Hz, 3H), 1.17 (d, J = 6.3 Hz, 3H), 1.05 (s, 9H). ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃): δ 167.0, 155.8, 135.6, 135.3, 134.2, 133.7, 133.6, 129.7, 129.6, 127.7, 127.6, 125.0, 123.2, 81.5, 65.9, 63.7, 61.4, 33.5, 26.8, 19.2, 16.0, 14.2. HRMS (ESI) [M+H]⁺ calcd. for C₃₀H₃₈O₅SiNa 529.2386, found 529.2360.

General procedure for the synthesis of 8a-b

A solution of 7a/7b (1 equiv.) and KOH (2 equiv.) in methanol and water was stirred at room temperature for 4 h at room temperature. The reaction mixture was poured into ice/water, and was acidified with 10% HCl to adjust the pH value to around 2. Then the mixture was extracted with ethyl acetate (3 × 40 mL). The combined organic layer was washed with NaHCO₃ solution and brine successively, and was dried over anhydrous Na₂SO₄. After filtration and concentration, the residue was dissolved in Ac₂O, and was heated under reflux for 1 h. Then reaction mixture was dried, and the residue was purified on a silica gel column to afford compound **8a/8b** as colorless oil.

8a (Yield: 70%). ¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ 7.65 – 7.62 (m, 3H), 7.56 – 7.53 (m, 3H), 7.47 – 7.29 (m, 6H), 7.20 (t, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 5.22 (ddd, *J* = 10.0, 4.4, 2.0 Hz, 1H), 4.35 (dd, *J* = 13.6, 4.4 Hz, 1H), 4.23 (dd, *J* = 13.6, 10.0 Hz, 1H), 3.98 – 3.92 (m, 1H), 3.88 – 3.82

(m, 1H), 3.32 (dt, J = 12.5, 6.0 Hz, 1H), 2.88 (dt, J = 13.8, 7.1 Hz, 1H), 2.50 (d, J = 2.0 Hz, 1H), 1.05 (s, 9H). ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃): δ 169.2, 149.8, 136.9, 135.6, 135.5, 133.8, 133.6, 133.5, 129.9, 129.6, 127.7, 124.8, 124.5, 70.3, 66.8, 63.7, 33.4, 26.9, 19.2. HRMS (ESI) [M+H]⁺ calcd. for C₂₉H₃₀O₄SiNa 493.1811, found 493.1829.

8b (Yield: 74%). ¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ 7.67 (d, J = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.59 (d, J = 7.3 Hz, 2H), 7.56 (d, J = 7.3 Hz, 2H), 7.48 – 7.31 (m, 7H), 7.11 (t, J = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 4.50 (br, 1H), 4.21 (d, J = 13.4 Hz, 1H), 4.04 (dd, J = 13.4, 5.5 Hz, 1H), 3.87 (q, J = 6.0 Hz, 2H), 3.03 – 2.98 (m, 1H), 2.91 – 2.86 (m, 1H), 1.32 (d, J = 6.4 Hz, 3H), 1.04 (s, 9H). ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃): δ 169.9, 151.9, 136.5, 135.5, 133.7, 133.6, 131.9, 130.6, 129.6, 127.6, 123.3, 122.7, 99.9, 68.7, 63.6, 33.5, 26.8, 19.2, 17.7. HRMS (ESI) [M+H]⁺ calcd. for C₂₈H₃₂O₄SiNa 483.1968, found 483.1965.

General procedure for the synthesis of 9a-b

To a solution of **8a/8b** (1 equiv.) in THF was added a solution of TBAF (1.5 equiv.) in THF, and the resulting solution was stirred for 2-3 h. The reaction mixture was poured into ice/water, and extracted with ethyl acetate (3×40 mL). The combined organic layer was dried over anhydrous Na₂SO₄. After filtration and concentration, the residue was purified on a silica gel column to afford compound **9a/9b** as colorless oil. **9a** (Yield: 90%).¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ 7.56 (d, J = 7.7 Hz, 1H), 7.50 (d, J = 7.5 Hz, 1H), 7.19 (t, J = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 5.39 – 5.22 (m, 1H), 4.38 (dd, J = 13.6, 4.3 Hz, 1H), 4.24 (dd, J = 13.4, 10.3 Hz, 1H), 3.89 – 3.74 (m, 2H), 3.29 – 3.23 (m, 1H), 2.85 – 2.79 (m, 1H), 2.66 (s, 1H), 2.23 (br, 1H). ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃): δ 169.2, 149.8, 136.2, 133.3, 129.9, 125.2, 124.6, 77.3, 70.5, 66.8, 62.6, 33.2. HRMS (ESI) [M+H]⁺ calcd. for C₁₃H₁₂O₄Na 255.0633, found 255.0632.

9b (Yield: 85%). ¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ 7.62 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.46 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.13 (t, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 4.71 – 4.67 (m, 1H), 4.31 (dd, *J* = 13.5, 2.8 Hz, 1H), 4.14 (dd, *J* = 13.5, 5.8 Hz, 1H), 3.82 (t, *J* = 6.5 Hz, 2H), 3.00 (dt, *J* = 13.3, 6.6 Hz, 1H), 2.86 (dt, *J* = 13.4, 6.5 Hz, 1H), 1.43 (d, *J* = 6.5 Hz, 3H). ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃): δ 169.9, 151.8,

135.9, 131.9, 130.6, 123.8, 123.2, 68.7, 62.6, 33.5, 17.7. HRMS (ESI) [M+H]⁺ calcd. for C₁₂H₁₄O₄Na 245.0790, found 245.0794.

General procedure for the synthesis of 10a-b

To a solution of 9a/9b (1 equiv.) in acetone was added Jones' reagent (Prepared from 250 mg CrO₃, 0.25 mL H₂SO₄, and 0.75 mL H₂O) till the reaction mixture gave a reddish solution at 0 °C. Then reaction mixture was stirred for another 3 h at room temperature. The reaction mixture was then poured into icy water, and extracted with ethyl acetate (3 × 40 mL). The combined organic layer was dried over anhydrous Na₂SO₄. After filtration and concentration, the residue was purified on a silica gel column to afford compound 10a/10b as white solid.

10a (Yield: 65%). ¹H NMR (CD₃OD): δ 7.65 (dd, J = 7.6, 1.6 Hz, 1H), 7.61 (dd, J = 7.6, 1.6 Hz, 1H), 7.29 (t, J = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 5.41 (ddd, J = 9.0, 4.2, 2.2 Hz, 1H), 4.52 (dd, J = 13.7, 4.2 Hz, 1H), 4.31 (dd, J = 13.7, 9.0 Hz, 1H), 4.01 (d, J = 16.8 Hz, 1H), 3.70 (d, J = 16.8 Hz, 1H), 3.23 (d, J = 2.2 Hz, 1H). ¹³C NMR (CD₃OD): δ 173.5, 169.7, 150.2, 136.4, 130.2, 129.4, 124.6, 124.4, 77.8, 77.1, 70.8, 66.9, 34.8. HRMS (ESI) [M-H]⁻ calcd. for C₁₃H₉O₅ 245.0450, found 245.0444.

10b (Yield: 68%). ¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ 7.76 (d, J = 7.8 Hz, 1H), 7.46 (d, J = 7.4 Hz, 1H), 7.15 (t, J = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 4.78 – 4.65 (m, 1H), 4.35 (d, J = 13.6 Hz, 1H), 4.21 (dd, J = 13.6, 5.4 Hz, 1H), 3.77 (d, J = 16.4 Hz, 1H), 3.66 (d, J = 16.4 Hz, 1H), 1.44 (d, J = 6.8 Hz, 3H). ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃): δ 177.0, 169.4, 152.3, 136.2, 132.3, 126.7, 123.3, 121.9, 77.8, 68.8, 35.8, 17.7. HRMS (ESI) [M-H]⁻ calcd. for C₁₂H₁₁O₅ 235.0606, found 235.0617.

General procedure for the synthesis of 11a-b

To a solution of compound **10a/b** (1 equiv.), 2, 2-dimethyl-1,3-dioxane-4,6-dione (1.4 equiv.), and DMAP (1.4 equiv.) in DCM was added EDC (1.4 equiv.) portion wise at 0 °C. The resulting mixture was stirred overnight at room temperature. Then the reaction mixture was diluted with DCM (30 mL), and washed with HCl 5% solution and brine

successively. The obtained organic layer was dried over anhydrous Na_2SO_4 . After filtration and concentration, the residue was purified on a silica gel column to afford compound **11a/11b** as yellow solid.

11a (Yield: 75%).¹H NMR (CDCl₃) δ 15.46 (s, 1H), 7.73 (dd, J = 7.7, 1.7 Hz, 1H), 7.52 (dd, J = 7.6, 1.6 Hz, 1H), 7.28 (t, J = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 5.33 – 5.30 (m, 1H), 4.88 (d, J = 17.5 Hz, 1H), 4.46 – 4.42 (m, 2H), 4.33 (dd, J = 13.7, 9.7 Hz, 1H), 2.67 (d, J = 2.2 Hz, 1H), 1.80 (s, 3H), 1.78 (s, 3H). ¹³C NMR (CD₃OD): δ 171.6, 170.2, 150.6, 136.7, 129.4, 124.4, 124.1, 101.9, 77.7, 77.4, 70.8, 67.3, 60.2, 25.0, 19.5, 13.1. HRMS (ESI) [M-H]⁻ calcd. for C₁₉H₁₅O₈ 371.0767, found 371.0760.

11b (Yield: 73%). ¹H NMR (CD₃OD): δ 7.54 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.38 (br, 1H), 7.11 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 4.63 (br, 1H), 4.39 – 4.31 (m, 2H), 4.16 – 4.05 (m, 2H), 1.64 (s, 6H), 1.35 (d, *J* = 6.0 Hz, 3H). ¹³C NMR (CD₃OD): δ 195.7, 171.6, 171.1, 166.8, 152.5, 136.2, 131.3, 130.8, 129.6, 123.0, 102.2, 101.7, 89.3, 77.6, 68.9, 60.1, 42.5, 24.9, 19.5, 16.7, 13.1. HRMS (ESI) [M-H]⁻ calcd. for C₁₈H₁₇O₈ 361.0923, found 361.0915.

General procedure for the synthesis of 12a-c

A solution of compound **11a/b** (1 equiv.), amine (2 equiv.), and TMSCl (3 equiv.) in toluene was heated under reflux for 2 h, then the reaction mixture was diluted with ethyl acetate (30 mL), and washed with NaHCO₃ solution and brine successively. The obtained organic layer was dried over anhydrous Na₂SO₄. After filtration and concentration, the residue was purified on a silica gel column to afford compound **12a-c** as yellowish oil.

12a (Yield: 75%). ¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ 7.69 (d, J = 7.7 Hz, 1H), 7.53 (d, J = 7.5 Hz, 1H), 7.39 – 7.08 (m, 1H), 5.37 – 5.17 (m, 1H), 4.44 (dd, J = 13.6, 4.1 Hz, 1H), 4.35 – 4.18 (m, 2H), 3.85 (d, J = 17.1 Hz, 1H), 3.68 – 3.61 (m, 8H), 3.45 – 3.30 (m, 2H), 2.72 (s, 1H). ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃): δ 200.9, 168.5, 164.9, 149.9, 136.9, 131.3, 128.3, 125.4, 124.4, 78.1, 70.7, 66.7, 66.6, 48.4, 46.8, 44.3, 42.2. HRMS (ESI) [M+H]⁺ calcd. for C₁₉H₁₉NO₆Na 380.1110, found 380.1110.

12b (Yield: 70%). ¹H NMR (CD₃OD): δ 7.66 (t, J = 8.1 Hz, 1H), 7.56 (t, J = 6.7 Hz, 1H), 7.31 (t, J = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 5.42 – 5.39 (m, 1H), 4.70 – 4.40 (m, 2H), 4.41 – 4.19 (m, 2H), 4.05 – 3.71 (m, 3H), 3.70 – 3.56 (m, 19H), 3.51 – 3.39 (m, 2H), 3.36 (s, 3H), 3.33 (br, 3H), 1.25 – 1.18 (m, 6H). ¹³C NMR (CD₃OD): δ 202.6, 201.7, 169.5, 169.5, 168.9, 167.7, 150.2, 136.8, 136.7, 130.6, 130.5, 129.0, 128.8, 124.8, 124.7, 124.4, 124.3, 78.4, 78.2, 77.3, 77.2, 71.6, 70.4, 70.2, 70.1, 70.0, 69.9, 68.4, 66.9, 57.71, 49.7, 49.1, 48.3, 44.2, 43.8, 43.6, 40.4, 20.0, 19.9, 19.1, 19.0. HRMS (ESI) [M+H]⁺ calcd. for C₃₁H₄₅NO₁₁Na 630.2890, found 630.2878.

12c (Yield: 74%). ¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ 7.79 – 7.55 (m, 1H), 7.45 (d, *J* = 7.4 Hz, 1H), 7.15 – 7.10 (m, 1H), 4.63 – 4.55 (m, 1H), 4.33 (dd, *J* = 13.6, 5.2 Hz, 1H), 4.16 (dd, *J* = 13.6, 5.2 Hz, 1H), 4.0 – 3.81 (m, 2H), 3.71 – 3.45 (m, 26H), 3.45 – 3.14 (m, 5H), 1.40 (d, *J* = 6.5 Hz, 3H), 1.16 (d, *J* = 5.7 Hz, 6H). ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃): δ 202.4, 201.8, 171.9, 169.5, 169.4, 167.4, 166.3, 152.3, 152.2, 136.6, 136.5, 131.9, 131.8, 127.7, 127.4, 123.6, 123.5, 122.5, 122.4, 77.8, 77.7, 71.9, 70.8, 70.7, 70.6, 70.5, 70.4, 68.8, 68.7, 68.6, 59.02 49.4, 48.9, 48.6, 46.4, 44.8, 44.7, 43.7, 40.7, 21.2, 20.4, 17.7. HRMS (ESI) [M+H]⁺ calcd. for C₃₀H₄₇NO₁₁Na 620.3047, found 620.3043.

General procedure for the synthesis of BW-ETCO-101-103

A solution of compound **12a-c** (1 equiv.), acenaphthylene-1, 2-dione (1 equiv.), and Et₃N (1.5 equiv.) in THF/MeOH (1:1) was stirred at room temperature overnight. The reaction mixture was then dried under vacuum, and the obtained residue was dissolved in Ac₂O (2 mL). The obtained solution was cooled to 0 °C, then 1-2 drops of concentrated sulfuric acid was added. The resulting dark purple solution was diluted with ethyl acetate, washed with NaHCO₃ solution and brine successively. The obtained organic layer was dried over anhydrous Na₂SO₄. After filtration and concentration, the residue was purified on a silica gel column to afford compound **BW-ETCO-101-103**. **BW-ETCO-101** (Dark solid. Yield: 64%). ¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ 8.08 (d, *J* = 7.0 Hz, 1H), 7.99 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz, 1H), 7.92 (d, *J* = 8.7 Hz, 1H), 7.85 (d, *J* = 7.1 Hz, 1H), 7.81 – 7.67 (m, 2H), 7.61 (m, 2H), 7.45 (t, *J* = 7.7 Hz, 1H), 5.13 (s, 1H), 4.39 (s, 1H), 4.25 (s,

1H), 3.94 - 3.70 (m, 6H), 3.58 (d, J = 3.0 Hz, 2H), 2.46 (d, J = 1.9 Hz, 1H). ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃): δ 198.8, 171.2, 168.8, 163.5, 162.6, 155.2, 145.6, 136.2, 131.6, 129.7, 129.6, 128.8, 128.0, 125.4, 124.8, 67.2, 66.9, 65.8, 60.4, 47.9, 42.7, 21.7, 15.3, 14.2. HRMS (ESI) [M+H]⁺ calcd. for C₃₁H₂₂NO₆ 504.1442, found 504.1429.

BW-ETCO-102 (Dark sticky oil. Yield: 60%). ¹H NMR (CD₃CN): δ 8.05 (d, J = 8.2 Hz, 1H), 8.00 (d, J = 8.2 Hz, 1H), 7.90 – 7.56 (m, 6H), 7.49 (t, J = 7.7 Hz, 1 H), 5.19 (br, 1H), 4.55 – 4.41 (m, 1H), 4.26 – 4.17 (m, 1H), 3.82 – 3.37 (m, 22H), 3.31 (d, J = 5.7 Hz, 5H), 2.95 (s, 0.3H), 2.71 (s, 0.6H), 1.40 (d, J = 6.7 Hz, 2H), 1.30 (d, J = 7.0 Hz, 0.4H), 1.23 – 1.17 (m, 3.6H). ¹³C NMR (CD₃CN): δ 198.9, 168.7, 163.9, 157.7, 150.0, 144.8, 136.0, 131.8, 130.9, 129.6, 128.9, 128.8, 128.0, 125.2, 123.1, 71.6, 70.2, 70.0, 69.8, 68.6, 66.7, 57.9, 50.6, 40.2, 20.9, 20.8, 19.8. HRMS (ESI) [M+H]+ calcd. for C₄₃H₄₈NO₁₁ 754.3222, found 754.3210.

BW-ETCO-103 (Dark sticky oil. Yield: 68%). ¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ 8.00 – 7.81 (m, 4H), 7.77 (dd, J = 17.7, 7.0 Hz, 1H), 7.67 (t, J = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.63 – 7.49 (m, 2H), 7.32 (t, J = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 4.78 – 4.55 (m, 2H), 4.23 – 4.01 (m, 2H), 3.82 (t, J = 6.2 Hz, 2H), 3.79 – 3.50 (m, 20H), 3.50 – 3.31 (m, 5H), 1.45 – 1.06 (m, 9H). ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃): δ 198.8, 169.56 164.3, 159.9, 155.2, 145.3, 136.1, 132.8, 131.7, 130.9, 129.9, 128.9, 128.7, 127.9, 123.6, 117.3, 78.1, 71.9, 70.6, 70.5, 68.9, 59.0, 50.8, 40.6, 21.7, 21.6, 20.6. HRMS (ESI) [M+Na]⁺ calcd. for C₄₂H₄₉NO₁₁Na 766.3203, found 766.3241.

The CO release of BW-ETCO-101/102 in the presence of porcine liver esterase

A solution of **BW-ETCO-101/102** (10 mg) and porcine liver esterase (15 mg) in 30% DMSO/PBS (50 mL) was incubated at 37 °C for 48 h. Then MeOH (60 mL) was added, and the solution was centrifuged to get rid of the protein. The obtained solution was dried under vacuum, and the residue was acidified and extracted with ethyl acetate. The obtained organic layer was dried over anhydrous Na₂SO₄. After filtration and concentration, the residue was purified on a silica gel column to afford the cyclized compound.

BW-ETCP-101. ¹H NMR (DMSO- d_6): δ 8.46 (d, J = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 8.37 (d, J = 7.1 Hz, 1H), 8.06 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 7.91 (d, J = 7.0 Hz, 1H), 7.73 (m, 3H), 7.36 (s, 1H), 7.30 (t, J = 7.7 Hz, 1H), 5.37 (s, 1H), 3.95 – 3.75 (m, 4H), 3.60 (m, 4H), 3.39 (s, 1H), 3.19 (d, J = 12.3 Hz, 1H). ¹³C NMR (DMSO- d_6): δ 167.9, 136.6, 133.9, 132.3, 131.7, 130.3, 128.9, 128.6, 128.5, 128.4, 127.6, 123.9, 123.8, 122.9, 121.9, 79.5, 66.4, 61.7, 47.5, 42.0. HRMS (ESI) [M+H]⁺ calcd. for C₃₀H₂₄NO₆ 494.1598, found 494.1583.

BW-ETCP-102. ¹H NMR (CD₃OD): δ 8.45 (d, J = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 8.38 (t, J = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 7.99 – 7.93 (m, 3H), 7.69 – 7.58 (m, 3H), 7.33 – 7.22 (m, 2H), 5.39 (br, 1H), 4.11 – 3.90 (m, 2H), 3.88 – 3.54 (m, 17H), 3.50 – 3.38 (m, 4H), 3.28 – 3.23 (m, 8H), 1.56-1.52 (m, 1.6 H), 1.33 (d, J = 6.9 Hz, 0.4 H), 1.24 (d, J = 6.5 Hz, 1H), 1.20 (d, J = 6.5 Hz, 1H), 1.14 (d, J = 6.5 Hz, 1H), 0.98 (d, J = 6.4 Hz, 1H). ¹³C NMR (CD₃OD): δ 171.2, 150.2, 136.4, 136.1, 135.9, 135.2, 135.2, 134.8, 133.8, 132.5, 131.3, 131.1, 130.9, 130.3, 128.2, 127.9, 127.8, 127.7, 127.4, 123.7, 123.5, 122.4, 122.2, 121.7, 121.4, 79.6, 76.8, 71.4, 70.2, 70.1, 70.0, 69.9, 69.9, 69.8, 69.7, 69.6, 68.7, 68.6, 65.5, 61.3, 57.7, 57.7, 54.8, 51.2, 51.2, 40.5, 33.9, 20.4, 20.3, 20.0, 19.9, 19.4, 19.2, 18.8. HRMS (ESI) [M+H]⁺ calcd. for C₄₂H₅₀NO₁₁ 744.3378, found 744.3367.



Scheme S2. The synthesis of the linker

To a solution of ethynyltrimethylsilane (2.0 g, 20.4 mmol) in THF (30 mL) was added *n*-BuLi (10.7 mL, 21.4 mmol) at -78 °C under N₂. Then the resulting solution was stirred for another 1 h, followed by the dropwise addition of 2-((tert-butyldimethylsilyl)oxy) acetaldehyde (2.3 g, 13.6 mmol). Then the stirring was continued for another 2 h. The reaction mixture was poured into a solution of NH₄Cl (50 mL), and extracted with ethyl acetate (3×60 mL). The combined organic layer was washed with water and brine, and was dried over anhydrous Na₂SO₄. After filtration and concentration, the residue was purified on a silica gel column to afford the title

compound as a colorless oil (yield: 80%). ¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ 4.40 – 4.36 (m, 1H), 3.76 (dd, *J* = 10.0, 4.0 Hz, 1H), 3.65 (dd, *J* = 10.0, 6.8 Hz, 1H), 2.72 (d, *J* = 4.8 Hz, 1H), 0.91 (s, 9H), 0.16 (s, 9H), 0.10 (s, 3H), 0.09 (s, 3H). ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃): δ 103.6, 90.0, 66.9, 63.5, 25.8, 18.3, -5.3. HRMS (ESI) [M+H]⁺ calcd. for C₁₃H₂₈O₂Si₂Na 295.1526, found 295.1526.

2. The amide rotamers for BW-ETCO-102

BW-ETCO-102/103 were obtained as a mixture of amide rotamers. Take **BW-ETCO-102** as an example, because there are one chiral centre and one rotation restricted amide bond, there are 4 possible isomers, including (R, E), (R, Z), (S, E), (S, Z). For each one, the dimethyl group of *iso*-propyl should appear as two doublet peaks. Therefore, 8 doublet peaks should be observed theoretically for **BW-ETCO-102**. However, only four doublet peaks were observed due to peak overlapping in CD₃CN at room temperature (Figure S1). The peaks begin to coalesce at elevated temperature (60 °C). These results supported the existence of amidic rotamers for **BW-ETCO-102**.



Figure S1. The amide rotamers of BW-ETCO-102

3. CO-myoglobin Assay

In order to further confirm CO release, **BW-ETCO-101** were chosen for COmyoglobin assay. For such purpose, a solution of myoglobin (0.5 mg/ml) and esterase (10 Unit/mL) in PBS (10 mL, pH = 7.4) was degassed by bubbling with nitrogen for at least 20 min. To this degassed solution was added a solution of **BW-ETCO-101** (0.45 mg) in DMSO (1 mL), and the resulting solution was incubated at 37 °C for 4 h. Then a solution of sodium dithionite (1 mL, 22 mg/mL) was added, and a red solution was obtained, which was cooled down to 0 °C with an ice bath, and was stirred for another 1 h. Afterwards, the UV-vis spectra of the resulting pinkish red solution was taken to confirm CO release. The results are shown in Figure S2.



Figure S2. The CO-myoglobin assay

4. CO release kinetics

CO release kinetics were studied indirectly using HPLC to monitor the disappearance of the prodrug and the formation of the cyclized product. Specifically, a solution of **BW-ETCO-101/102** (20 μ M) in DMSO/PBS (5%) was incubated with or without porcine liver esterase (10 Unit/mL) at 37 °C. The sample was analysed using HPLC on a column with 50% of CH₃CN/H₂O (containing 0.3% of TFA, pH = 3) as eluent at intervals. The prodrug remaining was plotted against time to obtain CO release kinetic curves. As shown in Figure S3-6, with or without esterase, the cyclized product **BW-ETCP-101/102** came as the sole product (confirmed by HRMS), and the hydrolysis of the lactone ring is much faster in the presence of esterase, as compared to the one without esterase.



Figure S3. The hydrolysis and cyclization of BW-ETCO-101 in the presence of the



Figure S4. The hydrolysis and cyclization of BW-ETCO-101 in the absence of the

esterase



Figure S5. The hydrolysis and cyclization of BW-ETCO-102 in the presence of the

esterase



Figure S6. The hydrolysis and cyclization of **BW-ETCO-102** in the absence of the esterase

5. MTT assay

Raw 264.7 cells were seeded in 96-well plates and cultured in Dulbecco's modified Eagle's medium (DMEM) supplemented with 10% fetal bovine serum (FBS) and 1% penicillin/streptomycin at 37 °C under 5% CO₂ for 24 h. Then RAW 264.7 cells were incubated in DMEM containing 1% DMSO and compounds (0 – 50 μ M) for 24 hours. Then 10 μ L of MTT solution was added to each well and incubated for another three hours at 37 °C. The absorbance at 570 nm was measured by using a microplate reader. The cell viability was measured and the results were shown in Figure S7-8.



Figure S7. The cytotoxicity results of BW-ETCO/CP-101 to Raw264.7 cells



Figure S8. The cytotoxicity results of BW-ETCO/CP-102 to Raw264.7 cells

6. Anti-inflammation effects of BW-ETCO-101 - 102

RAW 264.7 cells were seeded in 48-well plates one day before the experiment. LPS was used to initiate the inflammatory response in RAW 264.7 cells. RAW 264.7 cells were pre-treated with different concentrations of **BW-ETCO-101/102/103** or **BW-ETCP-101/102** for 4 hours. Thereafter, 1 μ g/mL LPS was added into the cell culture media. For the TNF- α test, the cell culture supernatant was collected 1 hour after LPS treatment. Cell culture without LPS treatment was used as the control. The concentrations of cytokine in the cell culture supernatant were measurement by a

commercial ELISA kit (ELISA Ready-SET-Go!®-eBioscience).

7. The fluorescent imaging of CO release

RAW 264.7 cells were seeded in the 6-well plate one day before the imaging experiment. Compounds were dissolved in DMSO as stock solution. Final concentration of 1 μ M COP-1 and different concentrations of **BW-ETCO-102/103** (25 μ M, 50 μ M) were added into the cell culture. After adding the compound, the cells were incubated under 37 °C for 5 hours. The cell samples were then fixed for imaging study under FITC channel (excitation: 490 nm, emission: 525 nm) for the fluorescence of **COP-1**, using a Zeiss fluorescent microscope.







Figure S11. The ¹H NMR spectrum of compound 3 in CDCl₃.



Figure S13. The ¹H NMR spectrum of compound 4 in CDCl₃.



Figure S15. The ¹H NMR spectrum of compound 5 in CDCl₃.



Figure S17. The ¹H NMR spectrum of compound 6a in CDCl₃.





Figure S19. The ¹H NMR spectrum of compound 6b in CDCl₃.



Figure S21. The ¹H NMR spectrum of compound 7a in CDCl₃.



Figure S23. The ¹H NMR spectrum of compound 7b in CDCl₃



Figure S25. The ¹H NMR spectrum of compound 8a in CDCl₃







Figure S31. The ¹H NMR spectrum of compound 9b in CDCl₃





Figure S35. The ¹H NMR spectrum of compound 10b in CDCl₃



Figure S37. The ¹H NMR spectrum of compound 11a in CDCl₃











Figure S45. The ¹H NMR spectrum of compound 12c in CDCl₃



Figure S47. The ¹H NMR spectrum of compound BW-ETCO-101 in CD₃CN



Figure S49. The ¹H NMR spectrum of compound BW-ETCP-101 in DMSO-d₆



Figure S51. The ¹H NMR spectrum of compound BW-ETCO-102 in CD₃CN



Figure S53. The ¹H NMR spectrum of compound BW-ETCP-102 in CD₃OD



Figure S55. The ¹H NMR spectrum of compound BW-ETCO-103 in CDCl₃



