



Oncternal Therapeutics and Karolinska Institutet Establish Collaboration for Research and Development of ROR1-targeting CAR-T and CAR-NK Cell Therapies

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SAN DIEGO and STOCKHOLM, Sweden, Jan. 07, 2021 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Oncternal Therapeutics, Inc. (Nasdaq: ONCT), a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company focused on the development of novel oncology therapies, today announced that it established a research and development collaboration with world-renowned Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm, Sweden, to advance novel ROR1-targeting cell therapies focused on CAR-T cells and CAR-NK (Natural Killer) cells from the laboratory into the clinic.

As part of the collaboration, IND-supporting preclinical studies will be performed in the Cell and Gene Therapy Group led by Evren Alici, M.D. Ph.D., within the NextGenNK Center, which is a Competence Center for the development of next-generation NK cell-based cancer immunotherapies. The Center is coordinated by Karolinska Institutet and collaborates with the Karolinska University Hospital as well as prominent national and international industrial partners. The Center was launched in 2020, and is jointly funded by Sweden's innovation agency Vinnova, Karolinska Institutet, and the industrial partners.

"Given that NK cells were discovered at Karolinska Institutet, we are excited to work together with industry partners to translate scientific advances into next-generation cell therapies that will benefit cancer patients," said Hans-Gustaf Ljunggren, M.D. Ph.D., Director of the NextGenNK competence center. "We look forward to collaborating with the outstanding team at Oncternal to develop cutting-edge T and NK cell therapies targeting ROR1, which is a promising target in many oncology indications. It could be ideally suited for cell therapy."

"We are honored to work together with the world-leading academic team at Karolinska Institutet to accelerate the development of our ROR1-targeting CAR-T cell immunotherapy program," said James Breitmeyer, M.D., Ph.D., Oncternal's President and CEO. "ROR1 has emerged as an important and underexplored target for cancer therapy, and we believe that ROR1-targeting CAR-T and CAR-NK therapies hold significant promise for patients with both hematologic cancers and solid tumors. We believe that utilizing the ROR1 binding domain of our clinical-stage antibody cirmtuzumab as a component of the CAR has the potential to give us a safety and efficacy advantage."

About Oncternal Therapeutics

Oncternal Therapeutics is a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company focused on the development of novel oncology therapies for the treatment of cancers with critical unmet medical need. Oncternal focuses drug development on promising yet untapped biological pathways implicated in cancer generation or progression. The clinical pipeline includes [cirmtuzumab](#), an investigational monoclonal antibody designed to inhibit the ROR1 (Receptor-tyrosine kinase-like Orphan Receptor 1) pathway, a type I tyrosine kinase-like orphan receptor, that is being evaluated in a Phase 1/2 clinical trial in combination with ibrutinib for the treatment of patients with mantle cell lymphoma (MCL) and chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL) and in an investigator-sponsored, Phase 1b clinical trial in combination with paclitaxel for the treatment of women with HER2-negative metastatic or locally advanced, unresectable breast cancer. The clinical pipeline also includes [TK216](#), an investigational targeted small-molecule inhibitor of the ETS family of oncoproteins, that is being evaluated in a Phase 1 clinical trial for patients with Ewing sarcoma alone and in combination with vincristine chemotherapy. In addition, Oncternal has a program utilizing the cirmtuzumab antibody backbone to develop a [CAR-T](#) therapy that targets ROR1, which is currently in preclinical development as a potential treatment for hematologic cancers and solid tumors. More information is available at www.oncternal.com.

About Karolinska Institutet

[Karolinska Institutet](#) is one of the world's leading medical universities. Its vision is to advance knowledge about life and strive towards better health for all. Karolinska Institutet accounts for the single largest share of all academic medical research conducted in Sweden and offers the country's broadest range of education in medicine and health sciences. The Nobel Assembly at Karolinska Institutet selects the Nobel laureates in Physiology or Medicine.

Forward-Looking Information

Oncternal cautions you that statements included in this press release that are not a description of historical facts are forward-looking statements. In some cases, you can identify forward-looking statements by terms such as "may," "will," "should," "expect," "plan," "anticipate," "could," "intend," "target," "project," "contemplates," "believes," "estimates," "predicts," "potential" or "continue" or the negatives of these terms or other similar expressions. These statements are based on the company's current beliefs and expectations. Forward looking statements include statements regarding Oncternal's beliefs, goals, intentions and expectations including, without limitation, Oncternal's belief that ROR1-targeting CAR-T and CAR-NK therapies hold significant promise for patients with hematologic cancers and solid tumors; whether using ROR1 binding domain as a component of the CAR therapeutic candidate will provide a safety or activity advantage over other drugs or drug candidates; the potential that ROR1 could be an ideal target for cell therapy; and other statements regarding Oncternal's development plans. Forward looking statements are subject to risks and uncertainties inherent in Oncternal's business, which include, but are not limited to: the risk that the collaboration with Karolinska Institutet will not generate any intellectual property or otherwise identify drug candidates for development or provide Oncternal any benefits; the COVID-19 pandemic may disrupt Oncternal's business operations or the business operations of Karolinska Institutet, increasing their respective costs; uncertainties associated with the clinical development and process for obtaining regulatory approval of product candidates, including potential delays in the commencement, enrollment and completion of clinical trials; Oncternal's dependence on the success of cirmtuzumab, TK216 and its other product development programs; the risk that competitors may develop technologies or product candidates more rapidly than Oncternal, or that are more effective than Oncternal's product candidates, which could significantly jeopardize Oncternal's ability to develop and successfully commercialize its product candidates; Oncternal's limited operating history and the fact that it has incurred significant losses, and expects to continue to incur significant losses for the foreseeable future; the risk that the company will have insufficient funds to finance its planned operations and may not be able to obtain sufficient additional financing when needed or at all as required to achieve its goals, which could force the company to delay, limit, reduce or

terminate its product development programs or other operations; and other risks described in the company's prior press releases as well as in public periodic filings with the U.S. Securities & Exchange Commission. All forward-looking statements in this press release are current only as of the date hereof and, except as required by applicable law, Oncternal undertakes no obligation to revise or update any forward-looking statement, or to make any other forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise. All forward-looking statements are qualified in their entirety by this cautionary statement. This caution is made under the safe harbor provisions of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995.

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