Oncternal Therapeutics Announces the Appointment of Jill DeSimone to the Board of Directors

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SAN DIEGO, Jan. 04, 2023 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Oncternal Therapeutics, Inc. (Nasdaq: ONCT), a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company focused on the development of novel oncology therapies, today announced the appointment of Jill DeSimone to its board of directors.

“We are thrilled to have Jill join the Oncternal board of directors. Jill’s accomplishments building a multi-billion dollar oncology business in the U.S. are a great fit for supporting Oncternal’s transition into a late-stage oncology company,” said James Breitmeyer, M.D., Ph.D., Oncternal’s President and CEO. “As we embark into our first global Phase 3 registrational study Zilo-301, we will greatly benefit from her guidance to help us build a compelling patient-centric value proposition for Zilovertamab.”

Ms. DeSimone was most recently President of U.S. Oncology at Merck & Co., Inc., where she built the company’s oncology division, growing it to over a $9 billion business in just eight years. She led three key product launches and more than 45 indication launches, including Keytruda®. Prior to joining Merck, she served as senior vice president of Global Women’s Health at Teva Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd from 2012 to 2014. Prior to her time at Teva, Ms. DeSimone served in several roles of increasing responsibility at Bristol Myers Squibb from 1980 to 2012, including senior vice president of U.S. Oncology & Commercial from 2010 to 2012 and senior vice president of U.S. Virology/HIV from 2006 to 2010. Ms. DeSimone currently serves as a member of the board of directors of Praxis Precision Medicines, Inc. and Affini-T Therapeutics Inc. She also serves as a board member for the Florida Cancer Specialists Foundation, a nonprofit organization that delivers non-medical aid for individuals undergoing cancer treatment. Ms. DeSimone received a B.S. in pharmacy from Northeastern University and completed a fellowship with the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

“I am honored to join the board at Oncternal, as it continues to advance its first-in-class late-stage oncology pipeline,” said Ms. DeSimone. “I believe Zilovertamab and ROR1 can play a key role in addressing significant unmet needs in hematological malignancies and solid tumors, and I look forward to working with the board at Oncternal to continue to bring important therapeutic innovations to patients.”

About Oncternal Therapeutics
Oncternal Therapeutics is a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company focused on the development of novel oncology therapies for the treatment of patients with cancers that have critical unmet medical need. Oncternal pursues drug development targeting promising, yet untapped biological pathways implicated in cancer generation or progression, focusing on hematological malignancies and prostate cancer. The lead clinical program is zilovertamab, an investigational monoclonal antibody designed to inhibit the function of Receptor Tyrosine Kinase-Like Orphan Receptor 1 (ROR1). ZILO-301, a global Phase 3 Study to evaluate zilovertamab in combination with ibrutinib for the treatment of patients with relapsed/refractory mantle cell lymphoma (MCL) has been initiated (NCT05431179). Zilovertamab continues to be evaluated in an ongoing Phase 1/2 study in combination with ibrutinib for the treatment of patients with MCL and chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL), and this trial was recently amended to include patients with marginal zone lymphoma (MZL) (NCT03088878). Zilovertamab is also being evaluated in two investigator-initiated studies, including a Phase 2 clinical trial of zilovertamab in combination with venetoclax, a Bcl-2 inhibitor, in patients with relapsed/refractory CLL, and in a Phase 1b study of zilovertamab in combination with docetaxel in patients with metastatic castration-resistant prostate cancer (mCRPC). Oncternal is also moving into the clinic with ONCT-808, an autologous chimeric antigen receptor T (CAR T) cell therapy that targets ROR1, with an active U.S. IND as of the end of September 2022 for the treatment of patients with relapsed or refractory aggressive B-cell lymphoma, including patients who have failed previous CD19 CAR T treatment. The preclinical pipeline also includes ONCT-534, a dual-action androgen receptor inhibitor (DAARI) that is undergoing final IND-enabling studies, as a potential treatment for castration resistant prostate cancer, including those with unmet medical need due to resistance to approved, standard of care androgen receptor inhibitors. More information is available at https://oncternal.com/.

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