DrugCendR Announces Initiation of CEND1-001 Phase 1 Trial for Metastatic Pancreatic Cancer

La Jolla, CA (August 13, 2018) - DrugCendR Inc., a biopharmaceutical company dedicated to developing next generation cancer therapies designed to overcome the barriers of drug delivery in solid tumors, announced today the treatment of the first patient in a Phase 1 clinical trial evaluating its lead compound CEND-1 (scientifically known as iRGD), in patients with metastatic pancreatic adenocarcinoma (CEND1-001, Clinical trial reference NCT03517176).

“Treating the first patient is an exciting milestone for our technology platform and for the company.” said Erkki Ruoslahti, President and CEO of DrugCendR Inc. “We chose to conduct the first study in pancreatic cancer, a cancer that is in desperate need of more effective therapies and shown to respond to CEND-1. Studies in preclinical models conducted all over the world also show that CEND-1 has wider potential; it enhances the therapy of many types of cancers by many types of drugs. We hope to make that potential a reality in the treatment of human cancer.”

Chief Operating Officer, Harri Jarvelainen continues,” We initiated our IND-enabling program a year ago so it is a great achievement to start dosing in this multi-site trial already now. Data from more than 100 publications have consistently demonstrated that CEND-1 is effective in the treatment of various types of solid tumors – but importantly, it is also a safe and well-tolerated compound, thanks to its tumor specific mechanism of action. As the extent of preclinical validation is almost unprecedented, we have a high confidence in the clinical translation of our therapy and hope that it will be soon available to patients with this and other cancers with high unmet medical need.”

About the CEND1-001 Phase 1 Clinical Trial

CEND1-001 is an open label, multicenter (4 hospitals in Australia), safety, pharmacokinetic and pharmacodynamic study in patients diagnosed with metastatic pancreatic adenocarcinoma. The study will assess the safety of the combination with gemcitabine and Abraxane, and determine an appropriate dose level for future studies. The principle for co-administrating CEND-1 with anti-cancer agents is that through enhancing their tumor penetration, the efficacy of the therapies is increased, while their toxicities are decreased.

About CEND-1

DrugCendR's proprietary CEND-1/iRGD technology platform is efficacious in enhancing the delivery of various types of co-administered anti-cancer compounds (small molecules, nanoparticles, antibodies) in a variety of types of solid tumors. To date the compound has been investigated, by the company founders and by numerous independent groups, in more than 100 publications and tested in more than 30 different cancer models. The pharmacology of CEND-1 is two-step: first, tumor homing through its RGD sequence and then – by means of molecular mimicry – activation of a transporter mechanism within the tumor microenvironment, providing a deep tumor access to co-administered anti-cancer agents.

About DrugCendR

DrugCendR Inc. is a privately held biopharmaceutical company founded in 2015. The company was spun out of the laboratory of Dr. Erkki Ruoslahti of Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute. The initial focus of company's technology is pancreatic cancer because, in addition to its poor prognosis, it is characterized by a dense extracellular matrix stroma, which acts as a physical barrier to drug entry. Since the active transport process initiated by CEND-1 overcomes this obstacle, and the target receptors for are highly expressed in advanced pancreatic cancer, CEND-1 appears particularly well suited to target PDAC. The company is planning for additional clinical trials in other cancer indications for its lead CEND-1 program, and has already started a follow-up CEND-2 program, which works through a well-validated immune-oncology pathway.

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