ConverGene Announces Sponsored Research Agreement with University of Maryland, Baltimore to Evaluate First-in-class Anti-cancer Agents

CAMBRIDGE, Md., Jan. 25, 2017 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- ConverGene has entered into a Sponsored Research Agreement with University of Maryland, Baltimore. Under this agreement University of Maryland School of Medicine Professor Curt I. Civin, M.D., who is associate dean for research and director of the Center For Stem Cell Biology & Regenerative Medicine, will investigate the in vivo anti-leukemic effects of ConverGene's lead drug candidates, CG223 and CG250. Acute Myelogenous Leukemia (AML) is a likely first disease target for these compounds. The *first-in-class* anti-cancer drug candidates exhibit dual activity inhibiting both BET bromodomains and dopamine receptor 2 (DRD2) while maintaining an excellent safety profile. Dr. Civin's lab is engaged through the agreement to:

1. Assess the toxicity of BET inhibitors to primary human hematopoiesis;
2. Identify novel synergies between ConverGene BET inhibitors and other anti-leukemic drugs.

ConverGene's CEO, Dr. Jeff Strovel, commented, "We are excited to kick-off this new collaboration with UMB. Dr. Civin is world-renowned for his expertise in normal and neoplastic hematopoiesis. His insight and ability to advance our understanding of CG223 and CG250 mechanism of action are unparalleled."

Dr. Civin added, "I look forward to determining the efficacy of these promising new targeted inhibitors against leukemias and their toxicity to normal hematopoiesis. We have reason to predict a large therapeutic window. In addition, we will pursue some exciting combinations of these drugs with other emerging anti-leukemic drugs. I am pleased to collaborate with a Maryland company, so that our collaborative research may create both cures and jobs close to home."

NOTES TO EDITORS

About Acute Myelogenous Leukemia (AML)

AML is an orphan disease and about 20,000 new cases will be diagnosed in the U.S. in 2017. Treatment of the disease has changed little over the last two decades and there are no branded AML products available on the U.S. market. Therapeutic regimens involve several courses of treatment with high doses of cytotoxic/cytostatic chemotherapy drugs known to induce considerable toxicity. Furthermore, current treatments rarely induce long-lasting complete remissions. Currently, only 25 percent of adults with AML are expected to survive three or more years. Thus, new classes of targeted AML therapy that intervene on cancer-specific pathways are desperately needed to improve the quality of life and survival rate in this patient population.

About ConverGene

ConverGene is a small molecule discovery company leveraging rational drug design. Our mission is to develop therapeutics with novel mechanisms of action for cancer patients with limited or no treatment options.

Our lead drug program is a *first-in-class,* oral, small molecule inhibitor selective against BET proteins.

ConverGene has discovered several series of novel, proprietary chemical compounds that suppress MYC oncogene and determined the mechanism of action is through inhibition of BET proteins. MYC drives growth and metastasis of many types of cancers including AML, prostate, breast, liver, pancreatic and lung cancer. Our clinical drug candidates block BET bromodomain proteins, leading to significant depletion of cancer gene products driven by MYC leading to striking inhibition of tumor growth in animal models. We predict this drug will gain broad clinical usage enabling ConverGene and its partners to capitalize on a multi-billion-dollar global oncology market.

ConverGene believes that its portfolio of intellectual property protects its product candidates and technologies. Opportunities to realize significant early value inflection points are available through strategic licensing of our drug candidates. For additional information on ConverGene, please visit convergenepharma.com.

For information on collaboration, contact Dr. Elizabeth Smith: esmith@convergenepharma.com