

Aligos Therapeutics and KU Leuven Announce Collaboration for the Development of a Therapeutic Candidate Targeting Coronavirus

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. and LEUVEN, Belgium, July 01, 2020 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Aligos Therapeutics, Inc. (Aligos), a private biotechnology company focused on the development of targeted antiviral therapies directed against chronic hepatitis B (CHB), COVID-19 and therapeutics for NASH, today announced that they have entered into a collaboration and license agreement with KU Leuven, in particular its Centre for Drug Design and Discovery (CD3), a drug discovery unit and investment mechanism of KU Leuven, and the Rega Institute for Medical Research, to develop a coronavirus protease inhibitor as a potential therapeutic candidate to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

Principal investigator Johan Neyts, Ph.D., professor of virology, and his scientific staff at the Rega Institute, together with the CD3 team, have focused for many years on discovering novel antiviral strategies against a number of virus families. In this collaboration, Johan Neyts' research group and CD3 will join forces with Aligos, whose team has extensive experience in antiviral drug discovery, development and viral protease inhibitor chemistry. Their combined objective is to develop a therapeutic candidate designed to target the SARS-CoV-2 infection as well as other coronavirus infections.

"The Rega Institute together with CD3 was a natural and complementary fit for this collaborative effort, with their longstanding track record of developing effective antiviral products against a number of viruses," said Aligos President Leonid Beigelman, Ph.D. "The teams agreed on the specific coronavirus protease as a promising therapeutic target, which is essential in the viral life cycle and conserved among viruses in the coronavirus family, meaning that a candidate that inhibits this target may also serve as a therapeutic in potential future coronavirus epidemics."

"Besides the urgent need for treatment options to fight the current SARS-CoV-2 virus," said Professor Neyts, "it is clear that there is also an important need for preparedness for the next coronavirus outbreak. A pan-coronavirus antiviral is the best and only approach to be able to respond quickly to any new emerging coronavirus in the future and avoid large outbreaks that may lead to epidemics or a pandemic."

"We are delighted to enter into this collaboration aiming to deliver a new drug against SARS-CoV-2 and other coronaviruses," said Patrick Chaltin, Managing Director of CD3. "The SARS-CoV-2 crisis demands the implementation of a strong integrated approach combining and leveraging world leading academic virology expertise and our early drug discovery capabilities with an exceptionally strong and committed biotech partner like Aligos."

About Aligos

Aligos Therapeutics, Inc. is a privately held biotechnology company that was founded in 2018 with the mission to become a world leader in the treatment of viral infections and liver diseases. Aligos is focused on the development of targeted antiviral therapies for chronic hepatitis B (CHB) and COVID-19 as well as leveraging its expertise in liver diseases to create targeted therapeutics for NASH. Aligos' strategy is to harness the deep expertise and decades of drug development experience its workforce has in liver disease, particularly viral hepatitis, to rapidly advance its pipeline of best-in-class molecules.

Please visit www.aligos.com for more information.

About the Centre for Drug Design and Discovery – KU Leuven

The Centre for Drug Design and Discovery (CD3) is a drug discovery platform and investment fund with a focus on the discovery and development of innovative medicines mainly starting from innovative academic research. By providing the necessary drug discovery expertise and financial resources, CD3 ensures that biomedical research carried out by universities and small biotech companies is collaboratively translated into promising new medicines. Subsequently, such new potential medicines can then be further developed by pharma or biotech industry or can form the basis for the establishment of new biotechs. CD3 was set up in 2006 by KU Leuven Research & Development and the European Investment Fund (EIF) and launched a 60 million euro fund in 2016.

Please visit www.cd3.eu for more information.

About Rega Institute

The Rega Institute for Medical Research is a biomedical research institute of KU Leuven that comprises the Laboratory of Virology and Chemotherapy, which specializes particularly in antiviral research. Medications discovered at the Rega Institute are successfully being used for the treatment of, for example, HIV, hepatitis B and infections caused by herpes viruses and several other drug candidates are in development against human rhinovirus, dengue and other (viral) diseases.

Please visit www.kuleuven.be/rega for more information.

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