Foghorn® Therapeutics Announces Collaboration with Merck to Discover and Develop Novel Oncology Therapeutics Against Transcription Factor Target

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CAMBRIDGE, Mass.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Foghorn® Therapeutics Inc., a company advancing an unprecedented class of therapeutics targeting the chromatin regulatory system in oncology, announced that it has entered into a strategic collaboration with Merck, known as MSD outside the United States and Canada. The collaboration will apply Foghorn's proprietary Gene Traffic Control™ product platform to discover and develop novel therapeutics against a transcription factor target believed to be relevant to a broad range of cancer patients.

The target is one of Foghorn's growing number of programs emerging from the company's product platform focused on chromatin dysregulation. The chromatin system regulates which genes a cell expresses and when it expresses them. Dysregulation of the chromatin system is implicated in up to half of all cancers.

Under the collaboration agreement, Foghorn will grant Merck exclusive global rights to develop and commercialize drugs that target dysregulation of a single transcription factor. Under the terms of the agreement, Foghorn will receive an upfront payment and research milestones and will be eligible to receive development, regulatory and commercial milestones potentially totaling up to $425 million as well as royalties on sales of any approved product from the collaboration.

"We're excited to partner with Merck given their world-renowned capabilities in cancer research and development," said Adrian Gottschalk, president and chief executive officer of Foghorn. "Our ability to systematically drug transcription factors using our proprietary product platform opens vast potential to discover and develop novel cancer treatments."

"There is broad evidence for the role of dysregulated transcription factors in multiple cancer types, but these have been difficult targets to drug," said Dr. Nick Haining, vice president, Discovery Oncology & Immunology, Merck Research Laboratories. "We look forward to working with Foghorn and applying their platform to identify novel candidates to drug transcription factors in cancer."

About the Chromatin Regulatory System

The chromatin regulatory system regulates gene expression by directing the movement of molecules that turn genes on and off. Disease dependencies associated with the chromatin regulatory system are estimated to impact over 2.5 million cancer patients across the United States, Europe and Japan. This system is further implicated in neurological, autoimmune, and other serious diseases.

About Foghorn Therapeutics

Foghorn® Therapeutics is discovering and developing a novel class of precision medicine therapeutics targeting the chromatin regulatory system in oncology. Through its scalable Gene Traffic Control™ product platform, Foghorn is systematically interrogating and drugging the chromatin regulatory system. The Company, currently in pre-clinical stage, is advancing over 10 small molecule and protein degrader programs across a wide range of cancers. The company expects to file an IND for its first program later this year.

Foghorn, a Flagship Pioneering® company, was founded in 2016 by Cigall Kadoch, Ph.D., Gerald Crabtree, M.D., and Doug Cole, M.D., of Flagship Pioneering. Learn more about Foghorn at www.foghorntx.com.

Contacts

Fanny Cavalié, Foghorn Therapeutics
+1 (617) 238-4954
fcavalie@foghorntx.com

Greg Kelley, Ogilvy
+1 (617) 761-6724
gregory.kelley@ogilvy.com