



Press release

For immediate release

AmorChem launches the project of its first Knock-Out™ winner

Montreal, DATE, 2014- AmorChem and Univalor are very pleased to be launching a project with Dr. John Stagg (Institut du cancer de Montréal, Centre de recherche du Centre Hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal), the winner of AmorChem's first Knock-Out™ Event. This project focuses on the development of a new therapeutic strategy to combat cancer.

"The quality and innovation of the work showcased by Dr. Stagg on the CD73 target earned him first place in the 2013 Knock-Out Event. We are very happy to be adding his project to our portfolio", says Inès Holzbaour, general partner at AmorChem. "The CD73 target has begun to gain traction with the pharmaceutical industry, some pharma companies having already deployed efforts in the antibody arena. We believe that the collaboration between Dr. Stagg and NuChem Therapeutics will allow for the discovery of interesting small molecule strategies."

"We are very enthusiastic about this 10th collaborative effort with AmorChem. It underlines our common efforts to support the commercialisation of university technologies" comments Patricia Escoffier, project manager, business development at Univalor. "Immunotherapy is increasingly becoming an attractive tool in cancer treatment and we believe that CD73 will play an important role in the field, ultimately giving more therapeutic options to cancer patients."

The CD73 target is a novel target for the development of anti-cancer agents. The interest around the target is based on the fact that it is thought to play a dual role in the fight against tumor cells. First, blocking its activity should lead the patient's immune system to regain its ability to subdue cancer cells. In addition to this, because CD73 plays a significant role in the metastatic process, blocking its activity should also decrease the tumor's ability to propagate in the patient's body. Promising initial results in Dr. Stagg's lab suggest that blocking CD73 does indeed both increase the immune response and decrease the metastatic progression.

"The Knock-Out Event is an important tool in AmorChem's efforts to reach out to researchers and identify projects of the highest commercial potential in which to invest. The closing of this collaboration with Dr. Stagg confirms to us that the event has reached its objective", says Elizabeth Douville, general partner at AmorChem.

ABOUT AMORCHEM L.P.

AmorChem L.P. (www.amorchem.com) is a venture capital fund located in Montreal focused on investing in promising life science projects originating from Quebec-based universities and research centres. The principal limited partners of this fund are Investissement-Québec, FIER Partenaires, Fonds de solidarité FTQ and Merck & Co. This fund is the latest addition to the GeneChem portfolio of funds, a fund manager in existence since 1997. AmorChem's innovative business model involves financing research-stage projects to enable them to reach pre-clinical proof-of-concept ("POC") in a semi-virtual mode within 18-24 months. The fund seeks to generate returns through a two-pronged exit strategy: sell projects having reached POC to large biotechnology or pharmaceutical companies; or bundle them into new spin-out companies. AmorChem using external resources will manage the projects. To that effect, AmorChem has established a strategic partnership with the Biotechnology Research Institute in order to access its R&D platforms. In addition, to enabling projects requiring small molecules as tools or drug leads, AmorChem has founded NuChem Therapeutics Inc., a medicinal chemistry contract-research company.

ABOUT UNIVALOR

Univalor (www.univalor.ca) is a university technology transfer organization. For over 13 years, it has been commercializing the scientific discoveries and technological innovations of some 2,600 researchers from the Université de Montréal (UdeM) and its affiliated health centres, Polytechnique Montréal and HEC Montréal. By transferring research-based discoveries and innovations from universities to industry, Univalor helps to make companies more competitive, generate revenue for additional research and, in particular, benefit society as a whole.

ABOUT CRCHUM

The CRCHUM (www.crchum.qc.ca) is the research arm of the CHUM. Its research activities directly contribute to the hospital's mission: health care, teaching, research, health promotion and technology evaluation. The CRCHUM improves the health of adults through a high-quality academic research continuum which, by improving our understanding of etiological and pathogenic mechanisms, fosters the development, implementation and assessment of new preventive, diagnostic and therapeutic strategies. The CRCHUM provides a training environment to ensure the development of new generations of researchers committed to research excellence.

ABOUT NUCHEM THERAPEUTICS INC.

NuChem Therapeutics Inc. (www.nuchemtherapeutics.com) is a medicinal chemistry contract-research company wholly-owned by AmorChem. With laboratories situated at the Biotechnology Research Institute in Montreal, the company is led by Dr. Daniel Guay, formerly of Merck Canada and the Institut de recherche en immunologie et cancérologie (IRIC).

ABOUT UNIVERSITÉ DE MONTRÉAL

The 64,000 students and professors associated with Université de Montréal and its affiliated schools for commerce (HEC Montréal) and engineering (École Polytechnique) are recognized for the high volume and quality of their research and for their international profile. Ten per cent of the university's students are from outside Canada, and 40% of research published by the university's community involves international collaboration. Within Canada, Université de Montréal's excellence is recognized by the awarding of half a billion dollars in funding; at an international level, it is consistently placed within the top 150 institutions in major world research rankings. www.umontreal.ca

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