



Leading Cancer Researcher Dr. Arthur M. Mercurio Joins aTyr as Scientific Advisor

March 17, 2020

Dr. Mercurio to advise company on the development of novel antibody therapeutics targeting neuropilin-2 (NRP2) for cancer

SAN DIEGO, March 17, 2020 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- aTyr Pharma, Inc. (Nasdaq: LIFE), a biotherapeutics company engaged in the discovery and development of innovative medicines based on novel immunological pathways, today announced the appointment of Arthur M. Mercurio, Ph.D. as a scientific advisor to the company. Dr. Mercurio currently serves as Professor and Vice Chair of the Department of Molecular, Cell and Cancer Biology at the University of Massachusetts Medical School.

"We would like to welcome Dr. Mercurio as a scientific advisor to our company and we look forward to his contributions as we continue to advance our understanding of NRP2 and its role in the development and metastatic progression of cancers," said Dr. Sanjay Shukla, President and Chief Executive Officer of aTyr. "The acceptance of our abstract for a poster presentation by the American Association for Cancer Research would not have been possible without the assistance provided by Dr. Mercurio and his team. Dr. Mercurio's guidance will prove invaluable as we continue to work to expand our NRP2 based pipeline and validate a new class of therapeutics based on NRP2 biology."

"There exists a significant body of research suggesting a link between NRP2 and many different tumor types, and further that NRP2 may be a factor in driving increased aggressiveness and malignancy," noted Dr. Mercurio. "After attending aTyr's inaugural summit meeting on NRP2 biology last year, it became clear that the company has emerged as a leader in the development of NRP2-based antibody therapeutics and diagnostic reagents. I am eager to work with the team to leverage their unique research as we try to exploit this unique target and identify promising new cancer therapeutics."

Dr. Mercurio joined the Department of Cancer Biology at the University of Massachusetts Medical School as its Vice Chairman in 2005 from Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and Harvard Medical School, where he served as the Director of the Division of Cancer Biology and Angiogenesis. Dr. Mercurio is a recipient of the American Cancer Society Junior Faculty and Faculty Research Awards and was an Honorary Professor at the University of Copenhagen. His research work is focused on understanding mechanisms that enable carcinomas to invade surrounding tissue and progress to metastatic disease, with an emphasis on mechanisms that regulate epithelial and carcinoma differentiation. Dr. Mercurio is an author of more than 150 peer reviewed publications. Dr. Mercurio received his B.S. in biochemistry *magna cum laude* from Rutgers University in 1975 and a Ph.D. in cell biology from Columbia University in 1981. He was a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Center for Cancer Research at M.I.T. from 1981-1985.

About NRP2

Neuropilin-2 (NRP2) is a cell surface receptor that plays a key role in lymphatic development and in regulating inflammatory responses. In many forms of cancer, high NRP2 expression is associated with worse outcomes. NRP2 can interact with multiple ligands and co-receptors through distinct domains to influence their functional roles, making it a potential drug target with multiple distinct therapeutic applications. NRP2 interacts with type 3 semaphorins and plexins to impact inflammation and with forms of vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF) and their receptors, to impact lymphangiogenesis. In addition, NRP2 modulates interactions between CCL21 and CCR7 potentially impacting homing of dendritic cells to lymphoid organs. aTyr is currently investigating NRP2 receptor biology, both internally and in collaboration with key academic thought leaders, as a novel target for new product candidates for a variety of diseases, including cancer and inflammation.

About aTyr

aTyr is a biotherapeutics company engaged in the discovery and development of innovative medicines based on novel immunological pathways. aTyr's research and development efforts are concentrated on a newly discovered area of biology, the extracellular functionality and signaling pathways of tRNA synthetases. aTyr has built a global intellectual property estate directed to a potential pipeline of protein compositions derived from 20 tRNA synthetase genes and their extracellular targets. aTyr's primary focus is ATYR1923, a clinical-stage product candidate which binds to the neuropilin-2 receptor and is designed to down-regulate immune engagement in interstitial lung diseases. For more information, please visit <http://www.atyrpharma.com>.

Forward-Looking Statements

This press release contains forward-looking statements within the meaning of the Private Litigation Reform Act. Forward-looking statements are usually identified by the use of words such as "anticipates," "believes," "estimates," "expects," "intends," "may," "plans," "projects," "seeks," "should," "will," and variations of such words or similar expressions. We intend these forward-looking statements to be covered by such safe harbor provisions for forward-looking statements and are making this statement for purposes of complying with those safe harbor provisions. These forward-looking statements, include statements regarding the potential therapeutic benefits and applications of our product candidates; our ability to successfully advance our product candidates, undertake certain development activities (such as the initiation of clinical trials, clinical trial enrollment, the conduct of clinical trials and the announcement of top-line results) and accomplish certain development goals, and the timing of such events; and the scope and strength of our intellectual property portfolio. These forward-looking statements also reflect our current views about our plans, intentions, expectations, strategies and prospects, which are based on the information currently available to us and on assumptions we have made. Although we believe that our plans, intentions, expectations, strategies and prospects, as reflected in or suggested by these forward-looking statements, are reasonable, we can give no assurance that the plans, intentions, expectations or strategies will be attained or achieved. All forward-looking statements are based on estimates and assumptions by our management that, although we believe to be reasonable, are inherently uncertain. Furthermore, actual results may differ materially from those described in these forward-looking statements and will be affected by a variety of risks and factors that are beyond our control including, without limitation, risks associated with the discovery, development and regulation of our product candidates, the risk that we may cease or delay preclinical or clinical development activities for any of our existing or future product candidates for a variety of reasons (including difficulties or delays in patient enrollment in planned clinical trials), the possibility of unexpected expenses or other demands on our cash resources,

and the risk that we may not be able to raise the additional funding required for our business and product development plans, as well as those risks set forth in our most recent Annual Report on Form 10-K, Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q and in our other SEC filings. Except as required by law, we assume no obligation to update publicly any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise.

Contact:

Joyce Allaire

Managing Director, LifeSci Advisors, LLC

jallaire@lifesciadvisors.com



Source: aTyr Pharma, Inc.