Cend Therapeutics Announces First Patient Dosing in Clinical Trial of CEND-1 for the Treatment of Selected Gastrointestinal Cancers

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SAN DIEGO, Nov. 16, 2021 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Patient dosing has begun in a Phase 1b/2a clinical trial to evaluate the safety, tolerability and pharmacologic activity of CEND-1 in pancreatic, appendiceal and colon cancers in collaboration with the University of Kansas Cancer Center (KUCC).

This investigator-initiated clinical trial will combine CEND-1 with FORFIRINOX, a standard chemotherapy regimen for all 3 cancer types. In colon cancer patients without a *K-RAS* mutation, the epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR) therapeutic antibody, panitumumab, will also be given.

“Encouraging safety and antitumor activity in pancreatic cancer patients were presented at the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) meeting last year with CEND-1 in combination with gemcitabine and nab-paclitaxel as first-line therapy. We are keen to explore how CEND-1 may improve patient outcomes with additional therapeutic combinations in pancreatic and other difficult to treat solid tumors,” said Anup Kasi, MD, MPH, principal investigator for the trial at KUCC.

“This trial is a significant step forward in our goal to establish the safety and efficacy of CEND-1 in a broad range of solid tumors, in combination with a broad range of anti-cancer agents,” said Harri Järveläinen, Chief Operating Officer of Cend. “Importantly, the study will enable translational assessments to identify potential indicators and biomarkers of efficacy as well as the ability of CEND-1 to modify the tumor immune microenvironment.”

Cend will continue to to advance CEND-1/gemcitabine/nab-paclitaxel development for first-line, metastatic pancreatic cancer and explore applications of CEND-1 in combination with additional agents, including immunotherapies for additional solid tumor cancer indications.

About CEND-1

CEND-1 is an investigational drug that modifies the tumor microenvironment. It is targeted to tumor vasculature by its affinity for *alpha*-v integrins that are selectively expressed in tumor, but not healthy tissue vasculature. CEND-1 is a cyclic peptide that, once bound to these integrins, is cleaved by proteases expressed in tumors to release a peptide fragment, called a CendR fragment, which binds to a second receptor, called neuropilin, to activate a novel uptake pathway that allows anticancer drugs to more selectively penetrate solid tumors. The ability of CEND-1 to modify the tumor microenvironment to enhance delivery and efficacy of co-administered drugs has been demonstrated in models of a range of solid tumors.

About Cend Therapeutics

Cend is a clinical-stage biotech company focused on a novel approach to enable more effective treatments for solid tumor cancers. Poor penetration of drugs into tumors is a major issue in cancer therapy as it limits access and therefore efficacy of current therapies. The CendR Platform provides a targeted tissue penetration capability to specifically enhance drug delivery to tumors. Cend is also applying its technology to alter immunosuppression selectively within the tumor microenvironment to enable a patient’s immune system and immunotherapies to more effectively fight cancer.