



Vir Biotechnology Announces Research Collaboration with the National Institutes of Health Vaccine Research Center on Antibodies Against Coronaviruses

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Joint research project to include SARS-CoV-2

SAN FRANCISCO, March 11, 2020 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Vir Biotechnology, Inc. (Nasdaq: VIR) today announced a research collaboration agreement with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), Vaccine Research Center (VRC) to advance characterization and development of human monoclonal antibodies (mAbs) against coronaviruses, including SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes the disease COVID-19. The joint project, which will begin this week, will augment ongoing efforts by both parties to identify antibodies that can be used to prevent or treat infection with existing and emerging viruses and help inform the development of vaccines.

Under the terms of the agreement, Vir and NIAID will work together to identify and optimize combinations of antibodies against coronaviruses, including SARS-CoV-2, SARS and MERS, as well as antibodies that may be effective across additional types of coronaviruses. The two parties will exchange antibodies and other materials for testing in combination and individually and, by mutual agreement, will perform in vivo animal studies to analyze immune responses.

"This collaboration expands Vir's efforts to characterize and develop antibody therapies against coronaviruses by allowing us to access the VRC's significant and broad research experience with coronaviruses, which is complementary to ours," said Herbert "Skip" Virgin, M.D., Ph.D., Chief Scientific Officer, Vir. "This is one of multiple approaches we are taking to rapidly identify and test potential prophylactics and therapeutics for COVID-19 and we expect it to allow us to accelerate finding solutions to this urgent public health need."

Vir has identified a number of monoclonal antibodies that bind to SARS-CoV-2. These antibodies were isolated from individuals who had survived a SARS infection. The company is conducting research to determine if its antibodies, or additional antibodies that it may be able to identify from COVID-19 survivors, can be effective as treatment and/or prophylaxis against SARS-CoV-2.

NIAID-funded scientists are exploring ways to treat and prevent human coronavirus infections by working to develop new antibodies, drugs, and vaccines that block entry to cells, enhance the immune system response, or block viral replication. To date, this research has focused on the coronavirus spike protein and includes development of neutralization assays and competition assays that are used to characterize antibodies.

About Vir's Antibody Platform

Vir has a robust method for capitalizing on unusually successful immune responses naturally occurring in people who are protected from, or have recovered from, infectious diseases. The platform is used to identify rare antibodies from survivors that have the potential to treat and prevent rapidly evolving and/or previously untreatable pathogens via direct pathogen neutralization and immune system stimulation. Vir engineers the fully human antibodies that it discovers to enhance their therapeutic potential. This platform has been used to identify and develop antibodies for pathogens including Ebola (mAb114, currently in use in the Democratic Republic of Congo), hepatitis B virus, influenza A, malaria, and others.

About Vir Biotechnology

Vir Biotechnology is a clinical-stage immunology company focused on treating and preventing serious infectious diseases. Vir has assembled four technology platforms that are designed to stimulate and enhance the immune system by exploiting critical observations of natural immune processes. Its current development pipeline consists of five product candidates targeting hepatitis B virus, influenza A, human immunodeficiency virus and tuberculosis. For more information, please visit www.vir.bio.

Forward-Looking Statements

This press release contains forward-looking statements within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Words such as "may," "will," "expect," "plan," "anticipate," "estimate," "intend," "potential" and similar expressions (as well as other words or expressions referencing future events, conditions or circumstances) are intended to identify forward-looking statements. These forward-looking statements are based on Vir's expectations and assumptions as of the date of this press release. Each of these forward-looking statements involves risks and uncertainties. Actual results may differ materially from these forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements contained in this press release include statements regarding the company's efforts to neutralize the SARS-CoV-2 virus and identify additional potential therapies for SARS-CoV-2, and its ability to address the emerging public health epidemic. Many factors may cause differences between current expectations and actual results including unexpected safety or efficacy data observed during preclinical or clinical studies, challenges in neutralizing SARS-CoV-2, difficulty in collaborating with other companies or government agencies, and challenges in accessing manufacturing capacity. Other factors that may cause actual results to differ from those expressed or implied in the forward-looking statements in this press release are discussed in Vir's filings with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, including the section titled "Risk Factors" contained therein. Except as required by law, Vir assumes no obligation to update any forward-looking statements contained herein to reflect any change in expectations, even as new information becomes available.

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