BlueRock Therapeutics Announces Key Members of Executive Team

CEO, CTO and VP of Corporate Development appointments to propel BlueRock's cell therapy development efforts

CAMBRIDGE, Mass., June 27, 2017 — BlueRock Therapeutics today announced a trio of hires that bolster the company's strategic and operational capabilities to develop breakthrough cell therapies for degenerative diseases such as Parkinson's and heart failure.

Emile Nuwaysir appointed president and CEO

Emile Nuwaysir, Ph.D., joins BlueRock as president and CEO. He possesses deep knowledge of the stem cell therapeutics space, and brings more than 15 years of experience cultivating innovative life science companies that are fueled by cutting-edge technologies. In addition, Dr. Nuwaysir helped guide and shape these companies from startup stages to their ultimate successful exits and integration into their global acquirers.

Dr. Nuwaysir previously served as president and COO of Cellular Dynamics International (CDI) – A Fujifilm Company, and played an integral part in growing CDI and their stem cell therapy efforts from a pre-revenue startup to a NASDAQ-traded firm that was acquired by Fujifilm Holdings for $307 million in 2015. He was also president of Opsis Therapeutics Inc., CDI's ocular cell therapy subsidiary.

Prior to CDI, Dr. Nuwaysir worked for NimbleGen Systems. He was the first employee hired at the company, and served in various roles of increasing scientific and managerial responsibility, including VP of business development, and group leader of molecular R&D. As a member of the senior management team, he helped orchestrate a dual-track IPO process leading to the company's acquisition by Roche Diagnostics for $273 million. After the acquisition, he served as CTO and SVP of program management at Roche NimbleGen, where he oversaw product portfolio and lifecycle management for Roche NimbleGen products, managed all business development activities, and led an R&D team in optical, mechanical and fluidics engineering, bioinformatics, molecular biology, photochemistry and software development.

Dr. Nuwaysir is vice chairman of Invenra Inc., an antibody discovery company he founded in 2011. He has held Postdoctoral Fellowships at the National Institutes of Health, and the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. He holds a B.A. from the University of Delaware, and a Ph.D. in molecular toxicology with a focus in oncology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

“I am honored to join the growing team at BlueRock in its mission to dramatically improve the quality of life for patients with degenerative disease. Our new generation of medicines have the potential to effectively reverse disease, and to repair the body when it cannot repair itself,” said Dr. Nuwaysir.

Robert Deans appointed Chief Technology Officer

Robert Deans, Ph.D., joins BlueRock as CTO and is responsible for implementing BlueRock’s novel induced pluripotent stem cell production platform. He has more than 25 years of experience in stem cell therapeutics, including hematopoietic as well as mesenchymal stem cell (MSC) cells and gene therapy approaches, as well as translational science and global regulatory expertise.

Dr. Deans previously served as CSO of Rubius Therapeutics, where he was responsible for development of a gene-engineered red cell therapeutics platform. Prior to Rubius, he was an EVP at Athersys, where he helped advance numerous adult adherent stem cell therapeutics into late-stage clinical development. Dr. Deans also served as VP of research at Osiris Therapeutics, where he developed Prochymal, which achieved clinical approval in some geographies. Before that he was director of R&D at Baxter Healthcare where he developed biologics, including a clinical-stage retroviral gene therapy.

He holds a B.S. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a Ph.D. in microbiology from the University of Michigan. Dr. Deans founded and chaired the International Society for Cellular Therapy’s Commercialization Committee and chaired the Science and Technology Committee of the Alliance for Regenerative Medicine.

Eric Soller appointed VP of corporate development and strategy

Eric Soller, Ph.D., joins the leadership team as BlueRock’s newly named VP of corporate development and strategy. Dr. Soller led the launch of BlueRock as an entrepreneur-in-residence at Versant Ventures, a leading healthcare investment firm committed to helping exceptional entrepreneurs build the next generation of great healthcare companies.

Prior to joining Versant in 2016, Dr. Soller was a junior partner in McKinsey & Company’s New York office and a leader in the firm’s healthcare and corporate finance practices. He has advised leading biopharma companies on a range of strategic and operational issues across marketing, sales, R&D, and business and corporate development.

He holds a B.S. in mechanical engineering with minors in applied biology and biomedical engineering from the Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, and a Ph.D. in mechanical engineering with a biomedical focus from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where his scientific work centered on induced organ regeneration.

“With BlueRock’s seasoned executive team, world-class scientific collaborations and the support of one of the largest Series A financings in biotech history, BlueRock is positioned to aggressively pursue the development of its novel induced pluripotent stem cell therapeutics platform,” said Jerel Davis, Ph.D., a managing director of Versant Ventures and a BlueRock board member.

Versant and Bayer AG launched BlueRock in December 2016 with a $225 million Series A investment.

About BlueRock Therapeutics
Driven by a vision to liberate patients from the burden of degenerative disease, BlueRock Therapeutics is ushering in a new era of cell-based medicine that repairs the body when it cannot repair itself. Founded in 2016 through one of the largest Series A financings in biotech history, BlueRock and its team of preeminent scientists are pioneering cell therapies that replace dead, damaged or dysfunctional cells to restore critical natural functions in the body. Using an approach that can be applied to multiple diseases with great unmet need, BlueRock is initially targeting severe brain and heart conditions, with the goal of altering the course of disease and drastically improving quality of life. BlueRock’s culture is defined by scientific innovation, highest ethical standards and an urgency to bring transformative treatments to all who would benefit. For more information, visit www.bluerocktx.com.

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