PLATELET BIOGENESIS

NEWS

PLATELET BIOGENESIS EXPANDS TO VENTURE DEVELOPMENT CENTER

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. (July 14, 2016) – Platelet BioGenesis, a biotech startup developing a method for producing life-saving platelets without the need for human blood-bank donations, announced today that it will be expanding its laboratory to the Venture Development Center (VDC) at the University of Massachusetts, Boston.

The VDC has committed to provide laboratory space, and access to a mouse facility as well as specialized microscopes in the university's new Integrated Science Center. Dr. Jill Macoska, head of UMass Boston's Center for Personalized Cancer Therapy, shepherded the animal study protocol approval through UMass Boston's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee. “Platelet BioGenesis is poised to achieve the production of human platelets - something once considered impossible. We look forward to continuing to support their growth, said William Brah, Founder and Director of the Venture Development Center. The move comes alongside Platelet BioGenesis’ need to expand its research team as it completes the transition of its research program from Dr. Thon’s academic lab.

“We couldn’t be happier to be growing and transitioning Platelet BioGenesis from its strong academic roots,” said Jonathan N. Thon, Ph.D., inventor of Platelet BioGenesis’ patented bioreactor and assistant professor at Brigham and Women’s Hospital. “The move will help Platelet BioGenesis expand our research team to achieve our preclinical research goals.” Co-founder and President Sven Karlsson added, “It’s remarkable how much our core team has been able to accomplish in such a short period of time. Nevertheless, what we’re trying to do at Platelet BioGenesis is nothing short of paradigm-shifting, and we’ll need the best and brightest to help us see it through. It’s time to accelerate our growth.”

Low platelet count is a significant consequence of cancer treatment, transplant, and surgery, for which platelets are a critical first-line therapy to prevent death from uncontrolled bleeding. Platelet units comprising 3x10^11 platelets per 200-400 mL are at present derived exclusively from human volunteer donors, and must be stored at or above 22^{o}C to avoid irreversible temperature-related activation/aggregation. Risk of bacterial growth during room-temperature storage limits shelf life to five days, two of which are consumed by bacterial screening, and one by transport. As a result, blood centers typically do not have more than a two-day platelet inventory available for transfusion, which is rapidly depleted in emergencies. By transitioning to a donor-independent system, patients will have access to safer platelets and will no longer be dependent on volunteer donors.

Dr. Thon acknowledges the Boston Biomedical Innovation Center and the Biomedical Research Institute at Brigham and Women's Hospital for providing translational research funding and resources which helped move his research from the academic lab onto a successful commercialization path.

About Platelet BioGenesis (www.plateletbiogenesis.com; twitter @plateletbiogen)
Platelet BioGenesis is a pre-clinical stage biotech company that was spun out of Harvard in 2014 to produce donor-independent human platelets from pluripotent stem cells Platelet BioGenesis has developed and patented a microfluidic bioreactor, and shown that functional platelets can be generated from human stem cell cultures at scale. The company was selected to participate in MassCONNECT (run by MassBio), was a 2014 MassChallenge Finalist, a 2016 BioSciKin business competition winner, and has received support from the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center, and the NIH.

About Venture Development Center
The VDC opened in 2009 with one simple goal in mind: to make it easier for exceptional entrepreneurial teams with important ideas - no matter what university they attended - to take the strategic step from their university setting to a more commercial environment where they can obtain the data required to secure investment and launch their companies. Today, we are proud to be launching some of the best startup companies anywhere, and to be stimulating innovation and entrepreneurship at the University of Massachusetts. To learn more, visit http://vdc.umb.edu/.

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