



Agenus' CD137 Agonist (AGEN2373) Advances in the Clinic, Triggering Milestone Payment from Gilead

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LEXINGTON, Mass., April 05, 2022 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Agenus Inc. (NASDAQ: AGEN), an immuno-oncology company with an extensive pipeline of therapeutics designed to activate immune response to cancers and infections, today announced receipt of a \$5M clinical milestone payment for AGEN2373 (conditionally active CD137 agonist). AGEN2373 is being evaluated in a Phase 1b combination study with botensilimab (Fc-enhanced anti-CTLA-4), in melanoma patients who had relapsed on, or were refractory to, prior anti-PD-1 therapy.

"The majority of patients treated with anti-PD-1 progress within a year and are in need of more effective treatment options," said Steven O'Day, MD, Chief Medical Officer of Agenus. "Botensilimab has shown promising activity in a wide range of treatment-resistant cancers, including melanoma. The rationale to combine botensilimab and AGEN2373 is based on preclinical evidence we reported of enhanced tumor control with this approach in a PD-1 resistant melanoma model. This study represents a rationally designed combination strategy to bring novel therapies to cancer patients."

AGEN2373 has demonstrated preliminary clinical benefit and has been well tolerated without signs of liver toxicity, an adverse event that has impacted competitor antibodies in the clinic. Gilead currently has an exclusive option to license AGEN2373. Agenus retains the right to opt-in to share Gilead's development and commercialization costs in the United States in exchange for a 50:50 profit share and US co-commercialization rights.

References

A. Tolcher et al., Initial findings of the first-in-human Phase I study of AGEN2373, a conditionally active CD137 agonist antibody, in patients (pts) with advanced solid tumors. [Presented at the ASCO 2021 Virtual Meeting.](#)

C. Galand et al., AGEN2373 is a CD137 agonist antibody designed to leverage optimal CD137 and FcγR co-targeting to promote antitumor immunologic effects. [Presented at the SITC 2020 Virtual Meeting.](#)

About AGEN2373

AGEN2373 is a fully human monoclonal antibody designed to boost the immune response to cancer cells by enhancing CD137 co-stimulatory signaling in activated immune cells. The unique binding properties of AGEN2373 are expected to limit its activity outside of the tumor site and mitigate toxicities that may be associated with systemic activation of CD137 in humans.

About Botensilimab

Botensilimab (also known as AGEN1181) is a next-generation, Fc-enhanced, immunoglobulin G1 (IgG1) antibody designed to block CTLA-4 (cytotoxic T-lymphocyte associated antigen 4) inhibitory function from interacting with its ligands CD80 and CD86. The Fc region of the antibody was engineered to enhance immune activation and tumor killing, improve safety, and benefit a broader patient population versus first-generation anti CTLA-4 antibodies. CTLA-4 is a negative regulator of immune activation that is considered a foundational target within the immuno-oncology market.

About Agenus

Agenus is a clinical-stage immuno-oncology company focused on the discovery and development of therapies that engage the body's immune system to fight cancer. The Company's vision is to expand the patient populations benefiting from cancer immunotherapy by pursuing combination approaches that leverage a broad repertoire of antibody therapeutics, adoptive cell therapies (through its subsidiary MiNK Therapeutics), and adjuvants (through its subsidiary SaponiQx). The Company is equipped with a suite of antibody discovery platforms and a state-of-the-art GMP manufacturing facility with the capacity to support clinical programs. Agenus is headquartered in Lexington, MA. For more information, please visit www.agenusbio.com and our Twitter handle @agenus_bio. Information that may be important to investors will be routinely posted on our website and Twitter.

Forward-Looking Statements

This press release contains forward-looking statements that are made pursuant to the safe harbor provisions of the federal securities laws, including statements relating to the use of therapeutic candidates AGEN2373 and botensilimab, for instance, statements regarding therapeutic benefit and efficacy, mechanism of action, potency, durability, and safety profile of the therapeutic candidates, both alone and in combination with each other and/or other agents; future clinical and regulatory development plans and commercialization plans for AGEN2373 and botensilimab; and any other statements containing the words "may," "believes," "expects," "anticipates," "hopes," "intends," "plans," "will" and similar expressions are intended to identify forward-looking statements. These forward-looking statements are subject to risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially. These risks and uncertainties include, among others, the factors described under the Risk Factors section of our most recent Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q or Annual Report on Form 10-K filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Agenus cautions investors not to place considerable reliance on the forward-looking statements contained in this release. These statements speak only as of the date of this press release, and Agenus undertakes no obligation to update or revise the statements, other than to the extent required by law. All forward-looking statements are expressly qualified in their entirety by this cautionary statement.

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