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Atara Biotherapeutics Names David A. Carmel as Head of Immunotherapy

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO, Calif., THOUSAND OAKS, Calif., and NEW YORK, March 3, 2015 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Atara Biotherapeutics, Inc. (Nasdaq:ATRA), a biopharmaceutical company focused on innovative therapies for patients with debilitating diseases, announced today that it has hired David A. Carmel as Head of Immunotherapy. Mr. Carmel will lead Atara's efforts in its collaboration with Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center (MSK) to develop and commercialize allogeneic T-cell therapies for the treatment of certain cancers and persistent viral infections. The collaboration will initially focus on development and regulatory activities for the three clinical stage targeted T-cell programs that Atara believes offer the most rapid path to marketing approvals. Atara and MSK also intend to expand research and development through sponsored research funded by Atara. Atara recently announced that MSK received breakthrough therapy designation from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for its cytotoxic T lymphocytes activated against Epstein-Barr Virus (EBV – CTL) in the treatment of patients with rituxamab-refractory, EBV-associated lymphoproliferative disease.

Prior to joining Atara, Mr. Carmel was a co-founder and principal of Carmel Asset Management, an investment partnership where he was responsible for life science investments. Previously, he led corporate development for StemCyte, Inc., a cell therapeutics company with operations in the U.S., Taiwan, and India. He worked on the California Stem Cell Research and Cures Initiative, a ballot initiative approved by voters in 2004 that provided \$3 billion to fund stem cell research. Earlier, he worked in U.S. Planning and Business Development at Pfizer, Inc., and at Independence Technology, a division of the Johnson & Johnson Corporation. Mr. Carmel served as the White House Fellow for the Secretary of the Treasury from 2002 to 2003.

"Atara is committed to working in alliance with MSK to bring therapies to patients with few other options," said Isaac Ciechanover, CEO of Atara. "David brings excellent strategic thinking and hands-on managerial experience to Atara. He has extensive knowledge of activated T-cell technology and a passion for getting therapies to patients as quickly as possible." Richard O'Reilly, Chair of the Department of Pediatrics and Chief of the Pediatric Bone Marrow Transplant Service at MSK, notes "I have known David for a long time and believe that his leadership will help accelerate our three programs in clinical trials. I also look forward to working with him on sponsored research opportunities for other T-cell programs."

Mr. Carmel is a founding board member of the New York Stem Cell Foundation, a member of the New York State Spinal Cord Injury Research Board, a co-founder of New Yorkers for Cures and a Henry Crown Fellow of the Aspen Institute. He earned a bachelor's degree, magna cum laude, from Harvard College and an MBA with a certificate in health care from the Stanford Graduate School of Business.

About Atara Biotherapeutics, Inc.

Atara Biotherapeutics, Inc. is a biopharmaceutical company focused on developing innovative therapies for patients with debilitating diseases. Atara's lead programs target myostatin and activin, members of the TGF-beta family of proteins that have demonstrated the potential to have therapeutic benefit in a number of clinical indications. In September 2014, Atara Biotherapeutics entered into an exclusive option agreement with Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSK), under which it has the right to license (pursuant to a negotiated form of license agreement) the exclusive, worldwide rights to three clinical stage T-cell programs, as well as other T-cell programs that are discovered or developed by MSK pursuant to sponsored research funded by the company.

Forward-Looking Statements

This press release contains or may imply "forward-looking statements" within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933 and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934. Because such statements deal with future events and are based on Atara's current expectations, they are subject to various risks and uncertainties and actual results, performance or achievements of Atara could differ materially from those described in or implied by the statements in this press release. For example, forward-looking statements include statements regarding the clinical development of product candidates and Atara's collaboration with MSK. These forward-looking statements are subject to other risks and uncertainties, including those discussed under the heading "Risk Factors" in Atara's annual report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2014 and subsequent filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Except as otherwise required by law, Atara disclaims any intention or obligation to update or revise any forward-looking statements, which speak only as of the date hereof, whether as a result of new information, future events or circumstances or otherwise.

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