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Newly Issued Japanese Patent For PDC Optical Agents Further Strengthens Cellecstar Biosciences' Intellectual Property Portfolio

MADISON, Wis., March 14, 2017 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Cellecstar Biosciences, Inc. (Nasdaq:CLRB) (the "company"), an oncology-focused, clinical stage biotechnology company, today announces the Japanese Patent Office has granted a composition of matter patent for the company's optical imaging phospholipid drug conjugates (PDCs), CLR 1501 and CLR 1502.

The recently issued patent, JP6073961, describes CLR 1501 and CLR 1502 for use in intraoperative tumor imaging both *in vitro* and *in vivo*. The patent allows intellectual property protection in Japan through May 11, 2030. Both compounds utilize the company's PDC delivery platform for tumor targeting optimization.

"This patent represents another demonstration of both the unique properties and varied utility of our PDC platform," said Jim Caruso, president and CEO of Cellecstar. "While our focus continues to be the development of the PDC platform for therapeutic uses, including our lead product candidate CLR 131 in hematologic malignancies, the additional global patent protection provides us with unique opportunities for partnerships to further explore the clinical utility of our technology and enhance the value of the platform."

About Phospholipid Drug Conjugates (PDCs)

Cellecstar's product candidates are built upon its patented cancer cell-targeting delivery and retention platform of optimized phospholipid ether-drug conjugates (PDCs). The company deliberately designed its phospholipid ether (PLE) carrier platform to be coupled with a variety of payloads to facilitate both therapeutic and diagnostic applications. The basis for selective tumor targeting of our PDC compounds lies in the differences between the plasma membranes of cancer cells compared to those of normal cells. Cancer cell membranes are highly enriched in lipid rafts, which are glycolipoprotein microdomains of the plasma membrane of cells that contain high concentrations of cholesterol and sphingolipids, and serve to organize cell surface and intracellular signaling molecules. PDCs have been tested in more than 80 different xenograft models of cancer.

About Cellecstar Biosciences, Inc.

Cellecstar Biosciences is developing phospholipid drug conjugates (PDCs) designed to provide cancer targeted delivery of diverse oncologic payloads to a broad range of cancers and cancer stem cells. Cellecstar's PDC platform is based on the company's proprietary phospholipid ether analogs. These novel small-molecules have demonstrated highly selective uptake and retention in a broad range of cancers. Cellecstar's PDC pipeline includes product candidates for cancer therapy and cancer diagnostic imaging. The company's lead therapeutic PDC, CLR 131, utilizes iodine-131, a cytotoxic radioisotope, as

its payload. CLR 131 is currently being evaluated under an orphan drug designated Phase I clinical study in patients with relapsed or refractory multiple myeloma. In addition, the company plans to initiate a Phase II clinical study to assess efficacy in a range of B-cell malignancies in the first quarter of 2017. The company is also developing PDCs for targeted delivery of chemotherapeutics such as paclitaxel (CLR 1602-PTX), a preclinical stage product candidate, and plans to expand its PDC chemotherapeutic pipeline through both in-house and collaborative R&D efforts. For more information please visit www.cellectar.com.

This news release contains forward-looking statements. You can identify these statements by our use of words such as "may," "expect," "believe," "anticipate," "intend," "could," "estimate," "continue," "plans," or their negatives or cognates. These statements are only estimates and predictions and are subject to known and unknown risks and uncertainties that may cause actual future experience and results to differ materially from the statements made. These statements are based on our current beliefs and expectations as to such future outcomes. Drug discovery and development involve a high degree of risk. Factors that might cause such a material difference include, among others, uncertainties related to the ability to raise additional capital, uncertainties related to the ability to attract and retain partners for our technologies, the identification of lead compounds, the successful preclinical development thereof, the completion of clinical trials, the FDA review process and other government regulation, our pharmaceutical collaborators' ability to successfully develop and commercialize drug candidates, competition from other pharmaceutical companies, product pricing and third-party reimbursement. A complete description of risks and uncertainties related to our business is contained in our periodic reports filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission including our Form 10-K/A for the year ended December 31, 2015. These forward-looking statements are made only as of the date hereof, and we disclaim any obligation to update any such forward-looking statements.

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