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ProMIS Neurosciences announces collaboration to develop serological test to assess COVID-19 immunity

Renowned leader in development of novel diagnostic tests Dr. Hans Frykman joins ProMIS scientific advisory board (SAB)

TORONTO and CAMBRIDGE, Mass., April 15, 2020 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- ProMIS Neurosciences, Inc. (TSX: PMN) (OTCQB: ARFXF), a company with a unique, core technology to predict novel targets on the molecular surface of complex proteins, announced today a collaboration with Dr. Hans Frykman and his team to develop a high-throughput, highly specific serological assay to accurately detect the presence of antibodies against SARS-CoV-2, the virus responsible for the COVID-19 pandemic. A test for COVID-19 immunity is essential to understanding patterns of immunity in the community and support an effective surveillance program, which public health authorities suggest is necessary to restart society.

A specific and sensitive test that could identify who has virus immunity and who remains at risk would enable normal societal function to recommence more effectively. A highly specific serology test for SARS CoV-2 is currently lacking due to its close relationship with other relatively benign (i.e., the common cold) but highly similar strains of coronaviruses. Prominent cross-reactivity between the family of coronaviruses hinders development of specific tests using traditional platforms such as ELISA (enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay).

“Community surveillance of COVID-19 is the largest unmet need of our decade,” stated Dr. Neil Cashman, ProMIS Chief Scientific Officer. “We are very pleased to welcome Dr. Frykman to the ProMIS SAB and to collaborate with him and his team to jointly address this gap. Dr. Frykman’s lab has a substantial track record for developing novel serological assays, including the application of sophisticated techniques such as surface plasmon resonance (SPR), to unambiguously determine specific antibody concentrations in human serum samples.”

Commenting on the collaboration, Dr. Frykman stated: “This exciting collaboration brings together our broad experience in developing sensitive and highly accurate serological tests with ProMIS’ unique ability to create peptide antigens based on rational identification of the site and shape (conformation) of epitope targets on complex protein structures, such as those displayed on the surface of the virus causing COVID-19. We anticipate that the predicted specificity of the ProMIS peptide antigens for the antibody response to COVID-19, without cross-reactivity with other coronavirus infections, will be an essential component for the rapid development of a highly sensitive and accurate serological assay.”

About Dr. Hans Frykman
Hans Frykman, MD, PhD, is the CEO and medical director of BC Neuroimmunology Lab and Neurocode Labs. BC Neuroimmunology lab has a 35-year history of delivering highly specific clinical neuroimmunology testing to the North American marketplace. The lab is a technology leader and is academically collaborating with several leading centers in Europe and USA. Neurocode labs is Canada's first and only clinical whole exome sequencing facility. Dr. Frykman is a clinical assistant professor of medicine at the University of British Columbia.

Dr. Frykman received his postgraduate medical training at Karolinska University Hospital, Mayo Clinic, University of Minnesota, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center and University of British Columbia. He received his medical degree from Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, PhD in Bio-organic chemistry from Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm and MSc in Chemical Engineering from Chalmers University in Gothenburg.

About ProMIS Neurosciences
ProMIS Neurosciences, Inc. is a development stage biotechnology company whose unique core technology is the ability to rationally predict the site and shape (conformation) of novel targets known as Disease Specific Epitopes on the molecular surface of proteins. Using this unique precision approach, the Company is developing novel antibody therapeutics that selectively target toxic oligomers of proteins implicated in the development and progression of neurodegenerative diseases, in particular Alzheimer's disease, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) and Parkinson's disease.

In the infectious disease setting, these disease-specific epitopes represent peptide antigens that can be used as an essential component to create accurate and sensitive serological assays to detect the presence of antibodies that arise in response to a specific infection, such as COVID-19. These peptide antigens can also be used to create potential therapeutic antibodies to treat active infection, as well as serve as the basis for development of vaccines. ProMIS is headquartered in Toronto, Ontario, with offices in Cambridge, Massachusetts. ProMIS is listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange under the symbol PMN, and on the OTCQB Venture Market under the symbol ARFXF.

Visit us at www.promisneurosciences.com or follow us on Twitter and LinkedIn

For media inquiries, please contact:
Shanti Skiffington
shanti.skiffington@gmail.com
Tel. 617 921-0808

For Investor Relations, please contact:
Alpine Equity Advisors
Nicholas Rigopulos, President
nick@alpineequityadv.com
Tel. 617 901-0785

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Source: ProMIS Neurosciences Inc.