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Molecular Templates Announces RNAi Drug-Delivery Research Collaboration with Alnylam Pharmaceuticals

GEORGETOWN, Texas--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Molecular Templates, Inc., a biopharmaceutical company focused on the discovery and development of a new class of small biologic therapies called Engineered Toxin Bodies (ETB), announced today that it has entered into a research collaboration with Alnylam Pharmaceuticals, Inc., a leading RNAi therapeutics company, to evaluate and develop Molecular Templates' proprietary technology for targeted delivery of RNAi therapies. No financial terms were disclosed.

ETBs represent a new class of biologic therapies evolved from a toxin scaffold that have been engineered with a unique targeting domain and designed for reduced immunogenicity. ETBs retain the predictable pharmacokinetics, mechanism-of-action, ability to induce internalization, and intracellular self-routing capabilities of the parent scaffold. Molecular Templates has created vast libraries of ETBs that can be rapidly screened on functionality where the target may or may not be known a priori. These unique properties allow ETBs to target cell surface or intracellular targets that may be intractable to antibody or small molecule approaches.

"We look forward to working closely with Alnylam, the leader in the RNAi space, to capitalize on some of the unique capabilities of our ETB platform," said Eric Poma, Ph.D., President and Chief Executive Officer of Molecular Templates. "ETBs represent a new class of targeted biologics that possess active intracellular properties that uniquely positions us to address delivery of RNAi drugs in a target directed manner."

About RNA Interference (RNAi)

RNA interference (or RNAi) is a naturally occurring mechanism within cells for selectively silencing and regulating specific genes. The discovery of RNAi has been widely acknowledged as a major breakthrough in biology, and the technology was recognized for its potential broad impact in medicine with the award of the 2006 Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine. Since many diseases are caused by the inappropriate activity of specific genes, the ability to silence genes selectively through RNAi has accelerated the understanding of these genes and their related pathways. Additionally, RNAi could provide a new way to treat a wide range of human diseases. RNAi is induced by small, double-stranded RNA molecules. One method to activate RNAi is with chemically synthesized small interfering RNAs, or siRNAs, which are double-stranded RNAs that are targeted to a specific disease-associated gene. The siRNA molecules are used by the natural RNAi machinery in cells to cause targeted gene silencing.

About Molecular Templates

Molecular Templates is a venture-backed biopharmaceutical company focused on the discovery and development of a new class of targeted biologic therapeutics called Engineered Toxin Bodies (ETB) platform technology. The company is pursuing development of various ETBs across a wide range of disease areas including cancer, autoimmune, and infectious disease. For more information, visit www.moleculartemplates.com.

Source: Molecular Templates, Inc