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Oxis Biotech Inc. Says It Has Identified Inhibitors That Could Block Zika Virus Replication

LOS ANGELES, March 1, 2016 /PRNewswire/ -- Oxis Biotech Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Oxis International Inc. (OTC: OXIS and Euronext Paris: OXI.PA), announced today that its research partners have made significant progress in the race to find a cure for the Zika virus.

Dr. Sean Xie, a research scientist, professor of pharmacology at the University of Pittsburgh and a member of Oxis' Scientific Advisory Board, said he has identified small molecule chemical inhibitors that target nonstructural proteins "with the potential for blocking Zika virus replication."

Dr. Xie is leading a Zika research project with funding from Oxis. He said he used his TargetHunter computer modeling system to break down key proteins the Zika virus needs for replication. That allowed him to identify inhibitors that could block the virus from replicating.

Oxis is hopeful that Dr. Xie's findings could help develop a vaccine and treatment for the Zika virus and greatly slow the spread of the disease.

"Oxis has made significant inroads by identifying these key inhibitors that could stop the Zika virus," said Anthony J. Cataldo, Chairman and Chief Executive of Oxis.

"Dr. Xie's ability to identify these inhibitors allows the Oxis team to move forward on presenting a realistic solution to the Zika virus. Our goal is to not only stop the spread of Zika, but also treat those affected by this disease."

The Zika virus, first identified 50 years ago, is spread through mosquito bites and has been linked to an increase in a rare birth defect, making the virus a significant threat to pregnant women. Additionally, there is a concern that the Zika virus can be spread sexually.

In January, the World Health Organization designated the Zika virus an international public health emergency. The agency estimated that virus will spread throughout the world and infect some 4 million people by the end of the year.

The Centers for Disease Control on Friday, February 26, 2016, advised pregnant women to

avoid traveling to Brazil, site of the upcoming Olympic Games, because the Zika virus is a particular problem in that country. As many as 1.5 million people are believed to have become infected with Zika in Brazil.

Mr. Cataldo said that Oxis, using Dr. Xie's research and the company's team of world-class immunotherapy experts, is working toward having a Zika treatment ready for testing in humans.

"Everything relevant happens with the immune system. Vaccines are geared to condition the immune system to fight diseases such as Zika. With the Olympics being held in Brazil, a known hot spot for Zika, we will make every effort to address this global problem," Mr. Cataldo said.

"Our Scientific Advisory Board members are some of the world's leaders in immunotherapy," Mr. Cataldo continued. "Dr. Xie and other key world-class scientists available to Oxis are well-suited for this."

Oxis is in collaboration with top research scientists to use immunotherapy to treat cancer and other diseases. Its lead drug candidate, OXS-1550, is currently in Phase 1/Phase 2 clinical trial at the University of Minnesota Masonic Cancer Center as a treatment for non-Hodgkins lymphoma and leukemia.

Inventors of OXS-1550 recently received a Notice of Allowance from the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO). Oxis holds worldwide exclusive rights to develop and commercialize OXS-1550.

Dr. Xie is Associate Dean for Research Innovation and a member of the Drug Discovery Institute at the University of Pittsburgh.

Mr. Cataldo, the company's founder, has a proven track record in biotech. He is the founder and former Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Lion Biotechnologies. He led the company from February 2011 until June 2013, using assets licensed from the National Cancer Institute for the treatment of stage four melanoma. Today, Lion has a market capitalization in excess of $250 million.

ABOUT OXIS INTERNATIONAL, INC. - Oxis International, Inc., through a wholly owned subsidiary, Oxis Biotech, Inc., develops innovative drugs focused on the treatment of cancer and other unmet medical needs. Oxis' lead drug candidate, OXS-1550 (DT2219ARL) is a novel bispecific scFv recombinant fusion protein-drug conjugate composed of the variable regions of the heavy and light chains of anti-CD19 and anti-CD22 antibodies and a modified form of diphtheria toxin as its cytotoxic drug payload. OXS-1550 simultaneously targets cancer cells expressing the CD19 receptor or CD22 receptor or both receptors. When OXS-1550 binds to cancer cells, the cancer cells internalize the drug and are killed due to the action of drug's cytotoxic payload. OXS-1550 has demonstrated success in early human clinical trials in patients with relapsed/refractory B-cell lymphoma or leukemia. OXS-4235 is a small molecule therapeutic candidate targeting the treatment of multiple myeloma and associated osteolytic lesions. In in vitro and in vivo models of multiple myeloma and osteoporosis, OXS-4235 demonstrated the ability to kill multiple myeloma cells, and decrease osteolytic lesions in bone. OXIS' lead drug candidate, OXS-2175, is a small molecule therapeutic candidate targeting the treatment of triple-negative breast cancer

(TNBC). In in vitro and in vivo models of TNBC, OXS-2175 demonstrated the ability to inhibit metastasis.

FORWARD LOOKING STATEMENTS - Except for historical information contained herein, the statements in this release are forward-looking and made pursuant to the safe harbor provisions of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Forward-looking statements are inherently unreliable and actual results may differ materially. Examples of forward-looking statements in this news release include statements regarding the payment of dividends, marketing and distribution plans, development activities and anticipated operating results. Factors which could cause actual results to differ materially from these forward-looking statements include such factors as the Company's ability to accomplish its business initiatives, significant fluctuations in marketing expenses and ability to achieve and expand significant levels of revenues, or recognize net income, from the sale of its products and services, as well as the introduction of competing products, or management's ability to attract and maintain qualified personnel necessary for the development and commercialization of its planned products, and other information that may be detailed from time to time in the Company's filings with the United States Securities and Exchange Commission. The Company undertakes no obligation to publicly update or revise any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise.

Company website: www.oxis.com