June 30, 2015

Rigel Welcomes Keith A. Katkin to Board of Directors

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO, Calif., June 30, 2015 /PRNewswire/ -- Rigel Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (Nasdaq: RIGL) today announced that Keith A. Katkin, president and chief executive officer of Avanir Pharmaceuticals, has been appointed to Rigel's board of directors. Mr. Katkin brings to Rigel's board extensive biopharmaceutical experience in commercial development, business development and operational management.

"Keith's background in directing product launches and his successful leadership of Avanir through a growth period, will be valuable to Rigel's transition into a commercial stage company," said Raul R. Rodriguez, president and chief executive officer of Rigel. "We look forward to Keith's insights and counsel as we prepare to move fostamatinib to market in the foreseeable future," he added.

Mr. Katkin is currently the president and CEO, and a member of the board of directors of Avanir Pharmaceuticals, a position he has held since March of 2007. Mr. Katkin joined Avanir in July of 2005 as the senior vice president of Sales and Marketing and a member of Avanir's executive management team. Mr. Katkin was responsible for creating and executing the plan that led to the approval of Nuedexta, the growth of the company to commercial success, and the recent acquisition of the company by Otsuka Pharmaceutical Co. in January 2015.

Prior to joining Avanir, Mr. Katkin served as the vice president, Commercial Development for Peninsula Pharmaceuticals, playing a key role in the concurrent initial public offering and ultimate sale of the company to Johnson and Johnson. Additionally, Mr. Katkin's employment experience includes leadership roles at InterMune, Amgen and Abbott Laboratories. Mr. Katkin is currently a member of the board of directors of Avanir, Carbylan Therapeutics and the Brain Injury Association of America. Mr. Katkin has an M.B.A. from the Anderson School at UCLA and earned his B.S. in Business and Accounting from Indiana University. Mr. Katkin is also a licensed certified public accountant.

About Rigel (www.rigel.com)

Rigel Pharmaceuticals, Inc. is a clinical-stage drug biotechnology company focused on the discovery and development of novel, small-molecule drugs for the treatment of inflammatory diseases, autoimmune diseases, and cancers. Rigel's pioneering research focuses on signaling pathways that are critical to disease mechanisms. Rigel currently has the following

product candidates in development: fostamatinib, an oral spleen tyrosine kinase (SYK) inhibitor, which is in Phase 3 clinical trials for ITP and initiating a Phase 2 clinical trial for IgA nephropathy (IgAN); R348, an ophthalmic JAK/SYK inhibitor, in a Phase 2 clinical trial for dry eye in ocular graft-versus-host disease (GvHD); two oncology product candidates in Phase 1 development with partners BerGenBio AG and Daiichi Sankyo; and two preclinical programs with partners AstraZeneca, for R256 in asthma, and Bristol-Myers Squibb, for TGF beta inhibitors in immuno-oncology.

This release contains forward-looking statements relating to, among other things, Rigel's transition into a commercial stage company, moving fostamatinib to market in the foreseeable future and Rigel's product pipeline and development programs. Any statements contained in this press release that are not statements of historical fact may be deemed to be forward-looking statements. Words such as "planned," "will," "may," "expect," and similar expressions are intended to identify these forward-looking statements. These forward-looking statements are based on Rigel's current expectations and inherently involve significant risks and uncertainties. Actual results and the timing of events could differ materially from those anticipated in such forward looking statements as a result of these risks and uncertainties, which include, without limitation, the availability of resources to develop Rigel's product candidates, Rigel's need for additional capital in the future to sufficiently fund Rigel's operations and research, the uncertain timing of completion of and the success of clinical trials, market competition, risks associated with and Rigel's dependence on Rigel's corporate partnerships, as well as other risks detailed from time to time in Rigel's reports filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, including its Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the three months ended March 31, 2015. Rigel does not undertake any obligation to update forward-looking statements and expressly disclaims any obligation or undertaking to release publicly any updates or revisions to any forward-looking statements contained herein.

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