

TuHURA Biosciences, Inc. Appoints Dennis Yamashita, Ph.D., as Chief Scientific Officer and Head of Discovery Research and Early Development

Brings over 30 years of experience in R&D drug discovery and development with a proven track record, including co-inventing Olinvyk (oliceridine), an FDA-approved Mu opioid G-protein biased ligand for treating post-surgical pain

Dr. Yamashita to focus on advancing the Company's novel personalized cancer vaccines to overcome tumor resistance to immunotherapies like checkpoint inhibitors and first-in-class bi-functional antibody drug conjugates (ADCs) targeting Myeloid Derived Suppressor Cells (MDSCs) to modulate their immunosuppressive effects on the tumor microenvironment

TAMPA, FL / ACCESSWIRE / February 7, 2024 / TuHURA Biosciences, Inc. ("TuHURA"), a Phase 3 registration-stage immuno-oncology company developing novel technologies to overcome resistance to cancer immunotherapy, today announced the appointment of Dr. Dennis Yamashita as Chief Scientific Officer and Head of Discovery Research and Early Development.

"We are very pleased to welcome Dr. Yamashita to the TuHURA team. He has proven himself many times over the course of his career with multiple successes. His appointment could not come at a better time as we prepare to launch our Phase 3 accelerated approval trial of our lead program, IFx-2.0, for the treatment of 1st line Merkel cell carcinoma this year," commented James Bianco, M.D., President and Chief Executive Officer of TuHURA.

Dr. Yamashita added, "TuHURA's novel technologies are currently focused on the most compelling areas in the oncology space. I am excited to join the team and leverage the Company's platform technology to identify further product candidates and add to the growing body of data demonstrating the potential to overcome primary and acquired resistance to checkpoint inhibitors, molecularly modified immune therapies and cellular therapies."

Dr. Yamashita is an exceptional and well-established drug hunter and medicinal chemist with over 30 years of experience in R&D drug discovery in pharmaceutical and biotech companies. He joins TuHURA having most recently served as the EVP Chemistry at Cambrian Bio and the President and Chairman of the Board of three stealth newcos focused on treating and preventing diseases driven by aging. Prior to that, he was VP Med Chem at Axial Therapeutics and led an immuno-oncology project to improve immune checkpoint inhibitor efficacy. Earlier, he was VP Drug Discovery at ORIC Pharmaceuticals and led projects aimed at overcoming drug resistance of oncology medicines. He started his biotech career as VP Chemistry at Trevena, which was founded by Nobel laureate Robert Lefkowitz. He was co-inventor of Olinvyk (oliceridine), an FDA-approved Mu opioid G-protein biased ligand for treating post-surgical pain. He began his career at GSK where he expanded his expertise in medicinal chemistry over a 20-year period with his last role leading drug discovery projects and research collaborations with premier academic institutions and identified four clinical drug candidates to treat cancer and osteoporosis.

Dr. Yamashita holds a B.S. from MIT in Chemistry and a Ph.D. in Organic Chemistry from Yale. His Ph.D. thesis was on the synthesis of calicheamicin, a potent natural product cytotoxic agent that was later incorporated into an antibody drug conjugate called Mylotarg used to treat acute myeloid leukemia. Additionally, he is an active volunteer as a mentor at the MIT Sandbox, an entrepreneurship program for MIT students that aims to move business ideas from concept to societal impacts.

About TuHURA Biosciences, Inc.

TuHURA Biosciences is a Phase 3 registration-stage immuno-oncology company developing novel technologies to overcome resistance to cancer immunotherapy. The company's lead personalized cancer vaccine candidate, IFx-2.0, is designed to overcome primary resistance to checkpoint inhibitors. TuHURA is preparing to initiate a single randomized placebo-controlled Phase 3 registration trial of IFx-2.0 administered as an adjunctive therapy to Keytruda[®]

(pembrolizumab) in first line treatment for advanced Merkel Cell Carcinoma.

In addition to its cancer vaccine product candidates, TuHURA is leveraging its Delta receptor technology to develop first-in-class bi-functional antibody drug conjugates (ADCs), targeting Myeloid Derived Suppressor Cells (MDSCs) to inhibit their immune suppressing effects on the tumor microenvironment to prevent T cell exhaustion and acquired resistance to checkpoint inhibitors and cellular therapies.

For more information, please visit tuhurabio.com.

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