Equillium Expands Scientific and Clinical Advisory Team

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LA JOLLA, Calif., May 06, 2019 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Equillium, Inc. (Nasdaq: EQ), a clinical-stage biotechnology company leveraging deep understanding of immunobiology to develop products to treat severe autoimmune and inflammatory disorders with high unmet medical need, today announced it has expanded its scientific and clinical advisory team with the appointment of Tom Daniel, M.D., Brian Kotzin, M.D. and Larry Steinman, M.D., who will join previously-appointed scientific advisors Vijay Kuchroo, DVM., Ph.D., Pradip Nair, Ph.D. and Fred Ramsdell, Ph.D. The newly appointed and existing members will advise the Equillium executive team on its scientific research and clinical programs, as well as general corporate strategy.

“We’ve assembled an exemplary group of well-respected, industry-leading scientific and clinical advisors with decades of combined experience in immunology, rheumatology, clinical development and business strategy,” said Daniel Bradbury, chairman and chief executive officer of Equillium. “Their combined contributions will no doubt have a strong positive influence on the company’s trajectory toward rapidly executing on our corporate and clinical goals, and we appreciate their commitment to Equillium’s success.”

Scientific and Clinical Advisors

Tom Daniel, M.D.: Tom is currently venture partner at ARCH Venture Partners, chairman at Vividion Therapeutics and a director at Sana Biotechnology, VIR Biotechnology Inc., Magenta Therapeutics Inc., ImmunsanT Inc., Zafgen Inc., and Gossamer Bio Inc. He also serves as trustee for Reed College, on the board of the Lupus Research Alliance and as chairman of the Oversight Committee of The Scripps Research Institute. Previously, Tom was president, global research and early development at Celgene Corporation as the company emerged as a leader in defining new mechanisms for drug action, established industry leading collaborative networks, and advanced and commercialized innovative medicines in oncology and inflammatory diseases. He previously served as chief scientific officer and director of Ambrx Inc., as vice president of research at Amgen Inc. and as senior vice president of discovery research at Immunex Corporation.

Tom was formerly Hakim Professor of Medicine at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. He earned his medical degree and trained in nephrology and molecular genetics at the University of Texas, Southwestern, and completed a medical residency at Massachusetts General Hospital.

Brian Kotzin, M.D.: Brian is a board-certified rheumatologist and internist and is currently senior vice president, clinical development at Nektar Therapeutics Inc. He previously served as vice president, global and clinical development and head, inflammation therapeutic area at Amgen, directing the global development efforts for Amgen product candidates in inflammation. During his time at Amgen, he also served as vice president of medical sciences, which encompassed early development, biomarker development, and clinical immunology. Brian has won numerous honors, including elected "Master" of the American College of Rheumatology, the Kirkland Scholar Award for Lupus Research, and Chairmanship of the National Institutes of Health Autoimmunity Centers of Excellence. He is an elected member of the American Association of Clinical Investigation and the Association of American Physicians.

Brian completed his medical education at Stanford University and residency in internal medicine at the Beth Israel Hospital at Harvard. He completed his rheumatology fellowship in Division of Rheumatology and Immunology at Stanford University Medical Center.

Larry Steinman, M.D.: Larry is a professor of neurology and neurological sciences, pediatrics and genetics at Stanford Medical School, where he leads a research team that focuses on the pathogenesis of autoimmune diseases. He was senior author on the seminal 1992 Nature article that reported the key role of a particular integrin in brain inflammation, leading to the development of the drug Tysabri.

Larry received his doctoral degree from Harvard Medical School, and he was a post-doctoral fellow in chemical immunology at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel. He has received many honors and awards, including the John M. Dystel Prize from the American Academy of Neurology and the National MS Society for his research on multiple sclerosis (MS), the Charcot Prize for Lifetime Achievement in MS research and the Cerami Prize for Translational Research. He has twice been awarded the Senator Jacob Javits Neuroscience Investigator Award by the National Institute of Neurological Diseases and Stroke. Larry is an elected member of the National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Medicine, formerly called the Institute of Medicine, and holds a number of patents pertaining to immunology.

Vijay Kuchroo, DVM, Ph.D.: Vijay is the Samuel L. Wasserstrom professor of neurology at Harvard Medical School, senior scientist at Brigham and Women’s Hospital, and co-director of the Center for Infection and Immunity, Brigham Research Institute, Boston. He is also a member of the Broad Institute, and a participant in a Klarman Cell Observatory project that focuses on T cell differentiation. He is the founding director of the Evergrande Center for Immunologic Diseases at Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women’s Hospital. As principal investigator of the Kuchroo Laboratory at Harvard, his major research interests include autoimmune diseases – particularly the role of co-stimulation – the genetic basis of experimental autoimmune encephalomyelitis and MS, as well as cell surface molecules and regulatory factors that regulate the induction of T cell tolerance and dysfunction.

Vijay obtained his degree in Veterinary Medicine from the College of Veterinary Medicine, Hisar, India, and subsequently specialized in pathology at the University of Queensland, Brisbane Australia, where he obtained a Ph.D. He is the recipient of the Fred Z. Eager Research Prize, the Javits Neuroscience Award by the National Institutes of Health, the Ranbaxy Prize in Medical Research, the Nobel Laureate Peter Doherty Lecture/Prize, and was named Distinguished Eberly Lecturer.

Fred Ramsdell, Ph.D.: Fred is chief scientific officer at the Parker Institute for Cancer Immunotherapy, where he leads the development of collaborative research programs. Prior to joining the Parker Institute, Fred served as vice president at aTyr Pharma Inc., helped establish Novo Nordisk's Inflammation Research Center in Seattle and led immunobiology discovery efforts at ZymoGenetics Inc. and Darwin Molecular/Celltech Pharma.

Fred earned his doctoral degree in microbiology and immunology from the University of California, Los Angeles. After a fellowship at the National Institutes of Health, Fred joined Immunex, studying T cell activation and tolerance, including the identification and characterization of various tumor necrosis factors and their receptors. The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences honored Fred and two other scientists with the Crafoord Prize for their pioneering work related to regulatory T cells and the role of the FOXP3 gene.

Pradip Nair, Ph.D.: Pradip is currently principle scientific manager at Biocon Limited and leads the drug discovery group where he worked extensively in the development of several novel monoclonal antibodies approved in India including BIOMAb™ (anti-EGFR) for head and neck cancers and ALZUMAb™ (itolizumab) for moderate to severe plaque psoriasis. He and his team played a pivotal role in advancing the understanding of the CD6 pathway and the mechanism of action of modulating anti-CD6 mAbs. Pradip has authored 16 scientific papers and holds two patents related to anti-CD6 mAbs granted in the U.S.

Pradip received his master of science in Zoology, specializing in molecular biology and biochemistry, from the Benares Hindu University, Varanasi, India. He obtained his Ph.D. from the Regional Cancer Center, Trivandrum, India under a Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) junior and senior research fellowship. Pradip completed his post-doctoral work at the National Center for Biological Sciences, Tata Institute of Fundamental research, Bangalore under a Department of Science and Technology (DST) Fast Track Young Scientist award.

About Equillium

Equillium is a clinical-stage biotechnology company leveraging deep understanding of immunobiology to develop products to treat severe autoimmune and inflammatory, or immuno-inflammatory, disorders with high unmet medical need.

Equillium's initial product candidate, itolizumab (EQ001), is a clinical-stage, first-in-class monoclonal antibody that selectively targets the novel immune checkpoint receptor CD6. CD6 plays a central role in modulating the activity and trafficking of T cells that drive a number of immuno-inflammatory diseases. Itolizumab is a clinically-validated therapeutic that has demonstrated a favorable safety and tolerability profile. Equillium acquired rights to itolizumab through an exclusive partnership with Biocon Limited. Equillium believes that itolizumab has the potential to be a best-in-class disease modifying therapeutic and is advancing itolizumab into clinical development in multiple immuno-inflammatory indications with high unmet medical need. For more information, visit www.equilliumbio.com.

Forward-Looking Statements

Statements contained in this press release regarding matters that are not historical facts are "forward-looking statements" within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Because such statements are subject to risks and uncertainties, actual results may differ materially from those expressed or implied by such forward-looking statements. Such statements include, but are not limited to, statements regarding the advisory team's expected contributions and influence on the Company's trajectory toward rapidly executing on its clinical and corporate goals; the Company's plans and expected timing for its clinical and corporate goals, and the potential benefits of itolizumab. Risks that contribute to the uncertain nature of the forward-looking statements include: uncertainties related to the Company's plans and product development, including the initiation and completion of clinical trials and whether the results from clinical trials will validate and support the safety and efficacy of itolizumab. These and other risks and uncertainties are described more fully under the caption "Risk Factors" and elsewhere in Equillium's filings and reports with the United States Securities and Exchange Commission. All forward-looking statements contained in this press release speak only as of the date on which they were made. Equillium undertakes no obligation to update such statements to reflect events that occur or circumstances that exist after the date on which they were made.

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