Cullinan Oncology, German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ) and the University of Tübingen Announce the Formation of Cullinan Florentine to Develop CLN-049, a Novel Bispecific Antibody for AML

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CAMBRIDGE, Mass. and TŰBINGEN, Germany, September 14, 2020 – Cullinan Oncology, LLC, the German Cancer Research Center and the Eberhard Karls University of Tübingen, Faculty of Medicine (University of Tübingen), Germany, today announced the formation of Cullinan Florentine, a company focused on developing a novel FLT3 x CD3 bispecific antibody for the treatment of patients with acute myeloid leukemia (AML). This antibody has been developed in Tübingen within the German Cancer Consortium (DKTK), whose core center is the German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ) in Heidelberg. Cullinan Florentine has acquired an exclusive license to develop CLN-049 from the University of Tübingen and the DKFZ.

“We believe the receptor tyrosine kinase FLT3 is among the most attractive targets in AML but is largely untapped as a target for T cell engaging antibodies,” stated Jennifer Michaelson, Ph.D., Chief Development Officer, Biologics at Cullinan Oncology. “Given CLN-049’s robust preclinical package and ease of manufacturability, we believe this bispecific antibody has the potential to be a superior treatment option for AML patients. We are looking forward to filing an IND for CLN-049 by year end.”

AML is a rapidly progressing cancer that forms in the bone marrow and results in an increased number of abnormal white blood cells in the bloodstream and bone marrow. AML remains one of the most challenging blood cancers, with high unmet medical need due to low median survival rates in patients. FLT3 is expressed on leukemic cells from the majority of AML patients, including prominent expression on leukemic progenitor cells.

FLT3 is a commercially validated target in AML, yet unlike small molecule inhibitors targeting FLT3, a T cell engaging antibody like CLN-049, which binds to the extracellular domain of FLT3, is agnostic to mutations in the intracellular signaling domain, opening up a broader patient population and avoiding resistance mechanisms. FLT3 has potential advantages over the more commonly selected target antigens for T cell engagers, such as CD33 and CD123, given the low-level expression of FLT3 on normal myeloid cells and hematopoietic stem cells. CLN-049 is therefore predicted to have an improved safety profile.

“We’ve long held the belief that FLT3 is among the most attractive targets in AML,” stated Helmut Salih, DKFZ/DKTK Professor and physician at Tübingen University Hospital, and Gundram Jung, Professor at Tübingen University, the originators of the molecule. “And we look forward to advancing CLN-049 into clinical testing with the help of the Cullinan team given their deep domain expertise in the bispecific field.”

About Cullinan Oncology LLC

Cullinan Oncology was formed to develop a diversified portfolio of highly promising single asset oncology opportunities through both internal and external means and to do so in a unique, cost-efficient model that leverages a central management team and shared services model to drive speed and efficiency. For additional information, please visit www.cullinanoncology.com.

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