



Vir Biotechnology Launches New Antibody Research Initiative Aimed at a Functional Cure for HIV and Prevention of Malaria

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– New commitment from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation supports the development of Vir’s novel “vaccinal antibody” technology as another important step in the fight to address global infectious diseases –

SAN FRANCISCO, Jan. 13, 2022 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Vir Biotechnology, Inc. (Nasdaq: VIR) today announced an expansion of its partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to include the advancement of innovative platform technologies in the development of broadly neutralizing antibodies designed to provide a “vaccinal effect” for the treatment of HIV and prevention of malaria. This novel program combines Vir’s extensive immunologic and virologic expertise with the Gates Foundation’s long-standing global health leadership to address two of the world’s most challenging infectious diseases.

“Vir’s partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has been a formative and essential part of our company history beginning with our T-cell vaccine program targeting HIV and tuberculosis. This expanded collaboration into a second platform technology supports our shared goal of developing innovative solutions for prevention and treatment of global infectious diseases. We look forward to applying the lessons learned thus far in COVID-19, chronic hepatitis B virus infection and influenza to advance our efforts toward curing HIV and preventing malaria,” said George Scangos, Ph.D., chief executive officer of Vir Biotechnology.

The new initiative includes a clinical proof-of-concept trial designed to evaluate the potential impact of broadly neutralizing antibodies engineered to inhibit viral replication and spread in people infected with HIV, as well as their ability to confer a vaccine-like effect that could be applicable to durable antiretroviral therapy (ART)-free suppression of HIV. Additional preclinical research is planned to assess the potential role of this technology in preventing malaria. The vaccinal antibody concept is currently being applied across Vir’s pipeline of potential SARS-CoV-2, chronic hepatitis B virus (HBV), and influenza A product candidates, and will now be used to address other infectious diseases with high impact in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

“Even though HIV has gone from being a near-term fatal disease to a chronic condition for those who have access to effective antiviral therapies, there remains a significant unmet need for new advances that could enable durable antiretroviral-free suppression of HIV. The foundation is pleased to support the development of this novel vaccinal antibody technology that has the potential to result in such suppression and is committed to advancing access to this cutting-edge innovation globally,” said Mike McCune, M.D., Ph.D., head of the HIV Frontiers Program at the Gates Foundation.

To support this effort, the Gates Foundation has committed a \$40 million equity investment and a \$10 million grant. The program-related equity investment is being made through its \$2.5 billion Strategic Investment Fund (SIF), which aims to stimulate private sector-driven innovation, encourage market-driven efficiencies, and attract external capital to priority global health and development initiatives that improve the health and wellbeing of underserved people around the world. Any financial returns generated by SIF are re-invested in Gates Foundation philanthropic programs.

About Vir Biotechnology

Vir Biotechnology is a commercial-stage immunology company focused on combining immunologic insights with cutting-edge technologies to treat and prevent serious infectious diseases. Vir has assembled four technology platforms that are designed to stimulate and enhance the immune system by exploiting critical observations of natural immune processes. Its current development pipeline consists of product candidates targeting COVID-19, hepatitis B virus, influenza A and human immunodeficiency virus. For more information, please visit www.vir.bio.

Forward-Looking Statements

This press release contains forward-looking statements within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Words such as “may,” “will,” “plan,” “potential,” “aim,” “promising,” and similar expressions (as well as other words or expressions referencing future events, conditions, or circumstances) are intended to identify forward-looking statements. These forward-looking statements are based on Vir’s expectations and assumptions as of the date of this press release. Forward-looking statements contained in this press release include, but are not limited to, Vir’s collaboration with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the potential application of Vir’s antibody-engineering platform technology to enhance the therapeutic and prophylactic efficacy of monoclonal antibodies for HIV and malaria. Many factors may cause differences between current expectations and actual results, including unexpected safety or efficacy data observed during preclinical or clinical studies, challenges in the treatment of hospitalized patients, difficulties in collaborating with other companies or government agencies, challenges in accessing manufacturing capacity, successful development, and/or commercialization of alternative product candidates by Vir’s competitors, changes in expected or existing competition, delays in, or disruptions to Vir’s business or clinical trials due to the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical changes or other external factors, and unexpected litigation or other disputes. Other factors that may cause actual results to differ from those expressed or implied in the forward-looking statements in this press release are discussed in Vir’s filings with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, including the section titled “Risk Factors” contained therein. Except as required by law, Vir assumes no obligation to update any forward-looking statements contained herein to reflect any change in expectations, even as new information becomes available.

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