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Cystic Fibrosis Foundation Therapeutics Announces $58 Million CF Drug Discovery Agreement with Pfizer

(Bethesda, Md.) - Cystic Fibrosis Foundation Therapeutics Inc. (CFFT), the nonprofit drug discovery and development affiliate of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, today announced a major expansion of its research collaboration with Pfizer Inc. designed to discover new drugs to treat people with the most common mutation of CF, Delta F508.

Under the new six-year pre-clinical research program with Pfizer, CFFT will invest up to $58 million to speed the discovery and development of potential therapies that target the underlying cause of cystic fibrosis. The program's goal is to advance one or more drug candidates into the clinic by the end of the multiyear collaboration.

"We are excited to expand our efforts with Pfizer to accelerate the development of more therapies that treat the root cause of CF and benefit the greatest number of people with the disease," said Robert J. Beall, Ph.D., president and CEO of the CF Foundation. "Pfizer brings impressive technical and scientific expertise, along with its commitment to improving the lives of people with cystic fibrosis."

In people with the Delta F508 mutation, a defective protein called CFTR does not fold correctly and is unable to reach the cell surface, where it is needed to help maintain the proper flow of salt and fluids into the airways. As a result, thick secretions form in the airways, leading to serious lung infections and lung damage. Nearly 90 percent of people with CF have at least one copy of the Delta F508 mutation.

The collaboration will focus on identifying therapies that help restore normal function of the defective protein. Pfizer researchers will draw on their leading expertise in developing therapies that help mutated proteins fold and route correctly within the cell.

"Innovative collaborations between industry and patient organizations are increasingly critical in expediting the translation of science into new treatments," said Jose-Carlos Gutierrez-Ramos, senior vice president of Pfizer BioTherapeutics R&D. "We look forward to continued collaboration with CFFT and to applying our leading science with the goal of identifying novel therapies for the treatment of this devastating disease."

This new agreement builds on CFFT's existing collaboration with Pfizer, which began in 2010 when Pfizer acquired the biotech company FoldRx Pharmaceuticals Inc., as part of the company's expanded effort to discover and develop innovative medicines for rare diseases. The acquisition included FoldRx's CF research program in collaboration with CFFT which started in 2007. Pfizer takes a collaborative approach to rare disease development and is partnering extensively with stakeholders throughout the community to significantly improve the lives of patients.

About the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation

The Cystic Fibrosis Foundation is the world's leader in the search for a cure for cystic fibrosis. The Foundation funds more CF research than any other organization, and nearly every CF drug available today was made possible because of Foundation support. Based in Bethesda, Md., the Foundation also supports and accredits a national care center network that has been recognized by the National Institutes of Health as a model of care for a chronic disease. The CF Foundation is a donor-supported nonprofit organization. For more information, go to www.cff.org.

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