Aura Biosciences Appoints David Johnson to Its Board of Directors

January 5, 2021

CAMBRIDGE, MA –January 5th, 2021– Aura Biosciences, a clinical-stage oncology company developing a novel class of drug conjugate therapies for multiple oncology indications, today announced the appointment of David Johnson to its Board of Directors. Mr. Johnson is a biopharmaceutical business leader with more than 25 years of experience in drug development and currently serves as Chief Executive Officer at VelosBio, a clinical-stage oncology company developing novel antibody-drug-conjugates and bispecific antibodies.

“With David’s impressive track record in oncology and as an accomplished CEO, his engagement and guidance will help Aura drive AU-011 for the treatment of choroidal melanoma to registration and commercialization,” said George Golumbeski, Ph.D., Chairman of the Board of Aura Biosciences. “In the last few years, David has led several biopharma transactions, including the acquisition of VelosBio by Merck for $2.75 billion. He has also successfully raised over $500 million in capital for his last two companies. We are really excited to have David’s strategic guidance as we work to accelerate the clinical development of our pipeline of innovative oncology therapies.”

“I am excited to be joining Aura’s Board of Directors during such an important period of growth for the Company,” said Mr. Johnson. “I look forward to leveraging my extensive clinical, business development, operational and executive leadership experience in the biotechnology industry to support Aura’s Board of Directors and leadership team in achieving their goal of advancing a new class of oncology drugs for life-threatening cancers.”

Prior to founding VelosBio, Mr. Johnson was the Chief Executive Officer at Acerta Pharma, an oncology-focused pharmaceutical company, where he led the Company through a critical phase of growth from approximately 40 to over 150 employees and from a signal-seeking, first-in-human trial to more than 20 active clinical studies. Under his leadership, Acerta designed and launched three registration-directed trials, including two global Phase 3 trials for acalabrutinib, an irreversible oral Bruton’s tyrosine kinase (BTK) inhibitor initially focused on hematological malignancies. Mr. Johnson and his leadership team ultimately led the acquisition of Acerta by AstraZeneca in a deal valued at up to $7 billion.

Before Acerta, Mr. Johnson held roles with increasing responsibility within commercial, pipeline development, medical affairs, and clinical development organizations at various healthcare companies including Hoffman-La Roche, Immunex (acquired by Amgen), Millennium (acquired by Takeda), Favrille, Gloucester (acquired by Celgene), and Calistoga (acquired by Gilead). He has made significant contributions to drugs ultimately garnering regulatory approvals, including bortezomib (Velcade®), romidepsin (Istodax®), idelalisib (Zydelig®), and acalabrutinib (Calquence®). In addition to Aura’s Board, Mr. Johnson serves on the Board of Directors of Zentalis Pharmaceuticals, a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company focused on discovering and developing small molecule therapeutics targeting fundamental biological pathways of cancers. Mr. Johnson received a Bachelor’s degree from Indiana University.

About Aura Biosciences

Aura Biosciences, Inc. is a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company developing a new class of oncology therapies based on a novel drug conjugate technology for initial application in ocular and bladder cancers with the potential to treat other cancers. The Company’s proprietary technology platform utilizes virus-like drug conjugates (VDCs) that have a dual mechanism of action with targeted necrosis of cancer cells, followed by a T-cell mediated anti-tumor response. This novel technology platform uses Virus-Like Particles to bind to a novel tumor cell surface target and can deliver hundreds of cytotoxic molecules selectively to tumor cells, while sparing surrounding healthy tissue. Aura’s lead product candidate belzupacap sarotalocan (AU-011) is currently in Phase 2 development for the first line treatment of choroidal melanoma, a vision and life-threatening form of eye cancer for which there are currently no approved therapies. In a Phase 1b/2 study, AU-011 demonstrated compelling efficacy, including high rates of tumor control and vision preservation, along with a favorable safety profile, in patients with choroidal melanoma. Future pipeline applications for Aura’s technology include choroidal metastases and non-muscle invasive bladder cancer. Aura is headquartered in Cambridge, MA. For more information, visit **www.aurabiosciences.com** or follow us on **Twitter**.

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