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Gotham Therapeutics Launches with \$54 Million Series A

Versant-seeded company translating insights about RNA-modifying protein targets into drug candidates

October 10, 2018 12:01 AM Eastern Daylight Time

NEW YORK--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Gotham Therapeutics, a biotechnology company developing a novel drug class targeting RNA-modifying proteins, debuted today with a \$54 million Series A financing co-led by founding investor Versant Ventures, Forbion and S.R. One. The syndicate also included Celgene Corporation and Alexandria Venture Investments. Gotham is part of New York's rapidly growing biopharma community with a subsidiary at one of Europe's leading life science clusters near Munich, Germany.

Versant created and seeded Gotham based upon the seminal discoveries of co-founder Samie Jaffrey, M.D. Ph.D., a pioneer in an exciting new field within RNA metabolism called epitranscriptomics. Dr. Jaffrey is a professor of pharmacology at Weill Cornell Medicine and a member of the Scientific Advisory Board for Gotham Therapeutics. His work has shed light on the role of post-transcriptional mRNA modifications in health and disease. These modifications and their biological effects are driven by protein complexes commonly described and categorized as writers, erasers and readers of the epitranscriptomic code.

With its seed funding, Gotham built a platform to assess the impact of RNA-modifying proteins on disease biology and developed small molecules against priority targets. The Series A proceeds will allow Gotham to establish clinical proof of concept and to invest broadly in a pipeline of preclinical candidates that have potential to treat diseases intractable to classical approaches.

"As we pursue several important targets, the information we glean will help us further validate and build our platform for increasingly broad applications. Our goal is to become the leader in drugging key proteins that modulate mRNA functionality, thereby impacting disease onset and progression," said Lee Babiss, Ph.D., CEO of Gotham.

"While academic research and the pharmaceutical industry focused initially on modifications of DNA, a growing body of evidence indicates that mRNA modifications help determine to which degree genes are translated into proteins. RNA modifications and their associated protein complexes therefore represent an untapped frontier that could yield new therapeutic approaches," added Dr. Jaffrey.

Gotham has assembled an experienced founding team led by Dr. Babiss, former President of Pharma Research at Roche. Dr. Babiss is an early adopter of RNA drug discovery approaches who has a track record of translating discoveries into therapeutic candidates. He also has served as CSO of PPD, and as Head of Human Genetics and Personalized Healthcare at Glaxo Wellcome.

“After following the developments in the RNA drug discovery field for a number of years, we felt this was the right time to build a company that could capitalize on translating the scientific discoveries into a whole new class of drug candidates,” said Carlo Rizzuto, Ph.D., Partner at Versant. “With our initial investment, the Gotham team constructed a platform able to validate critical links between specific types of RNA modifications and disease biology. We look forward to advancing a number of drug candidates with this new round of financing.”

“We are excited to invest in Gotham, one of the pioneers in the fast-emerging field of RNA metabolism, which could create a paradigm shift in both cancer therapy and other major diseases,” commented Holger Reithinger, Ph.D., General Partner at Forbion. “Gotham represents the first investment by our recently announced Forbion IV fund. Our new fund aims to help build leading companies around exciting new science, proven teams or in-licensed assets.”

Dr. Reithinger will join Dr. Babiss, Dr. Rizzuto and Jill Carroll, Principal, SR One, on Gotham’s Board of Directors. Jorge DiMartino M.D., Ph.D., Vice President, Translational Development Oncology at Celgene and Head of Celgene’s Epigenetics Thematic Center of Excellence, has joined the board in an observer role.

About Gotham Therapeutics:

Gotham Therapeutics has assembled an exceptional team and network to establish a novel drug class targeting RNA-modifying proteins. By changing the activity of proteins that modify messenger RNA, we aim to develop new treatment options for patients suffering from cancers, auto-immune and neurodegenerative diseases. We are applying a 360-degree approach to small molecule drug design to build a pipeline based on the promise of this rapidly emerging biopharmaceutical field. For more information, please visit: www.gothamtx.com

About Versant Ventures

Versant Ventures is a leading healthcare investment firm committed to helping exceptional entrepreneurs build the next generation of great companies. The firm’s emphasis is on biotechnology companies that are discovering and developing novel therapeutics. With \$2.4 billion under management and offices in the U.S., Canada and Europe, Versant has built a team with deep investment, operating and clinical expertise that enables a hands-on approach to company building. Since the firm’s founding in 1999, more than 70 Versant companies have achieved successful acquisitions or IPOs. For more information, please visit www.versantventures.com.

About Forbion

Forbion is a dedicated life sciences venture capital firm with offices in The Netherlands and Germany. Forbion invests in life sciences companies that are active in the (bio-) pharmaceutical space. Forbion’s investment team has built an impressive performance track record since the late nineties with successful investments in over 50 companies. Forbion manages well over EUR 1 billion across ten funds. Forbion is a signatory to the United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment. Besides financial objectives, Forbion selects investments that will positively affect health and well-being of patients. Its investors include the EIF, through its European Recovery Programme (ERP), LfA, Dutch Venture Initiative (DVI) facilities and AMUF facilities and the KfW through the ERP – Venture Capital Fondsfinanzierung facility. Forbion operates a joint venture with BGV, the manager of seed and early stage funds focused on Benelux and Germany. For more information, please visit: www.forbion.com.

About SR One

SR One is the corporate venture capital arm of GlaxoSmithKline. The firm invests globally in emerging life science companies pursuing innovative science to significantly impact medical care. SR One’s team of investment professionals, located in the US and UK, have experience spanning basic science, drug development and commercialization. We take an active role in our portfolio companies and work with management teams and our fellow venture investors to create significant value. In its 30+ year history, SR One has invested >\$1.1 billion in more than 180 companies, and its current portfolio includes 40+ private and public investments. For more information, please visit: <http://www.srone.com/>

About Celgene

Celgene Corporation, headquartered in Summit, New Jersey, is an integrated global biopharmaceutical company engaged primarily in the discovery, development and commercialization of innovative therapies for the treatment of cancer and inflammatory diseases through next-generation solutions in protein homeostasis, immuno-oncology, epigenetics, immunology and neuro-inflammation. For more information, please visit: <http://www.celgene.com/>

About Alexandria Venture Investments

Alexandria Venture Investments, founded in 1996, is the strategic venture capital arm of Alexandria Real Estate Equities, Inc. Alexandria Venture Investments focuses on novel, breakthrough discoveries in biopharma, diagnostics, research tools, agtech and technology. Based on its experience and in-depth understanding of the life science and technology industries, its long-term relationships with leading investors and its world-class international scientific advisory network, Alexandria Venture Investments is uniquely positioned to fund seed-, early- and growth-stage companies. For more information, please visit: <http://www.are.com/>

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