AC Immune Announces Research Collaboration with University of Pennsylvania Focusing on Pathogenic Protein TDP-43 in Neurodegenerative Diseases

August 12, 2019

LAUSANNE, Switzerland, Aug. 12, 2019 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- AC Immune SA (NASDAQ: ACIU), a Swiss-based, clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company with a broad pipeline focused on neurodegenerative diseases, today announced a research partnership with leading scientists in the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania (Penn) focused on studying the pathological mechanisms of TDP-43 misfolding and aggregation.

TDP-43, the transactive response (TAR) DNA binding protein, is a transcription factor found in most human tissues. It is a recently identified target of growing interest for neuroOrphan indications such as frontotemporal lobar degeneration (FTLD) and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). It also plays an important role in other significant neurodegenerative indications such as Alzheimer's disease (AD).

The collaboration is aimed at deciphering the governing principles of how pathological forms of TDP-43 spread from neuron to neuron, leading to a better understanding of the TDP-43 pathologies in order to support the Company's mission to develop novel therapeutic and diagnostic approaches against FTLD and other neurodegenerative diseases.

AC Immune will contribute a two-year research grant to the laboratory of Dr. John Trojanowski and Dr. Virginia M.-Y. Lee. Dr. Trojanowski's research focuses on neurodegeneration and has led to the novel view that major disease-related proteins including Tau, alpha-synuclein and TDP-43, are co-deposited in most neurodegenerative diseases and how these copathologies impact the clinical representation of these diseases. Dr. Lee is a world-renowned leader in research on Tau, alpha-synuclein and the Abeta precursor protein, studying their pathobiological roles in neurodegenerative diseases.

Prof. Andrea Pfeifer, CEO of AC Immune SA, commented: "We are very proud to be working with Penn and Dr. Trojanowski and Dr. Lee, two very well-respected experts in neurodegenerative diseases. The field is still investigating the precise causes of neurodegenerative diseases and how to prevent, treat and even cure them, including neuroOrphan indications such as FTLD. Increasing our knowledge of the role of TDP-43 in disease pathology will mark valuable progress in this effort. AC Immune has generated several antibodies with unique binding profiles to TDP-43, and we are looking forward to results from preclinical proof-of-concept studies in Q3 2019."

About AC Immune SA

AC Immune SA is a Nasdaq-listed clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company, which aims to become a global leader in precision medicine for neurodegenerative diseases. The Company is utilizing two proprietary discovery platforms, SupraAntigen™ and Morphomer™, to design, discover and develop small molecule and biological therapeutics as well as diagnostic products intended to diagnose, prevent and modify neurodegenerative diseases caused by misfolding proteins. The Company's pipeline features nine therapeutic and three diagnostic product candidates, with five currently in clinical trials. It has collaborations with major pharmaceutical companies including Roche/Genentech, Eli Lilly and Janssen Pharmaceuticals Inc.

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Forward looking statements
This press release contains statements that constitute "forward-looking statements" within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933 and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934. Forward-looking statements are statements other than historical fact and may include statements that address future operating, financial or business performance or AC Immune's strategies or expectations. In some cases, you can identify these statements by forward-looking words such as "may," "might," "will," "should," "expects," "plans," "anticipates," "believes," "estimates," "predicts," "projects," "potential," "outlook" or "continue," and other comparable terminology. Forward-looking statements are based on management's current expectations and beliefs and involve significant risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results, developments and business decisions to differ materially from those contemplated by these statements. These risks and uncertainties include those described under the captions "Item 3. Key Information – Risk Factors" and "Item 5. Operating and Financial Review and Prospects" in AC Immune's Annual Report on Form 20-F and other filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Forward-looking statements speak only as of the date they are made, and AC Immune does not undertake any obligation to update them in light of new information, future developments or otherwise, except as may be required under applicable law. All forward-looking statements are qualified in their entirety by this cautionary statement.

Source: AC Immune SA