

What's New



NEW HEALTHCARE-RELATED
PRODUCTS, SERVICES,
AND COMPANIES

Virtual Library of Deprioritized Compounds

Part of Unique Partnership

U.K. researchers have access to compounds through a new partnership between the Medical Research Council (MRC) and seven global drug companies.

AstraZeneca, GlaxoSmithKline, Janssen R&D, Lilly, Pfizer, Takeda, and UCB each will offer a number of their deprioritized molecules for use in new studies to improve understanding of a range of diseases, with a view to developing more effective treatments through a partnership with the Medical Research Council (MRC).

The compounds have undergone some degree of industry development, but all have stalled at some point in early testing — many because they were not sufficiently effective against the disease in question. However, they may be useful against other diseases with shared biological pathways.

These compounds are incredibly valuable to academic researchers, who can use them to understand how a disease takes hold in the body and how it might be stopped or slowed down. It is hoped that re-purposing such compounds could lead to the development of new medicines for many debilitating conditions. And because the compounds already have undergone some preliminary development, such as safety testing, any new treatments arising from the research could reach patients much more quickly.

Projects funded through a previous compound sharing initiative between the MRC and AstraZeneca already are demonstrating success in this area, with the first human trials of a new treatment for chronic cough getting underway.

“Our ground-breaking compound collaboration with

AstraZeneca attracted a huge amount interest from the academic community, and saw the MRC award \$12 million for research into Alzheimer’s, cancer, and rare diseases,” says Professor Sir John Savill, chief executive of the MRC. “We’re now building on this success by expanding into a rolling program with seven companies that will allow the academic community to access even more assets for use in innovative research projects. By funding studies using these compounds, which otherwise would not be carried out, we will enable scientific breakthroughs that will improve the health of patients in the U.K. and worldwide.”

A full list of available compounds will be published later this year, when U.K. scientists will be able to apply for MRC funding to use them in academic research projects.

There is no fixed budget for the program, which will make the compounds available on a continuous basis via the MRC’s normal response-mode funding mechanism. It is hoped more companies, and more compounds, will be added as it progresses.

Research proposals will be submitted to the MRC, which will independently judge the scientific quality of the applications and award funding accordingly. The rights to intellectual property (IP) generated using the compounds will vary from project to project, but will be equitable and similar to those currently used in academically led research.

▼ *For more information, visit mrc.ac.uk*

Serenus Biotherapeutics to Bring Innovative Therapies to Sub-Saharan Africa



Dr. Menghis Bairu

Serenus Biotherapeutics, a specialty biopharmaceutical company, was recently established to bridge the divide between the world’s leading pharmaceutical markets and the growing demand for access to innovative therapies in the emerging nations of Sub-Saharan Africa.

Menghis Bairu, M.D., the former executive VP, chief medical officer, and head of global develop-

ment of Elan Corp., is founder, chairman, and CEO of the new company.

Africa is undergoing a major shift in its healthcare burden as economic growth, a rising middle class, and urbanization are fueling an increase in the incidence of chronic diseases and creating demand for medications. The continent is expected to experience the largest increase in death rates from cardiovascular disease, cancer, respiratory disease, and diabetes during the next decade. At the same time, pharmaceutical spending is growing at a compounded annual rate of 10.6% and is expected to reach \$45 billion by 2016, according to the healthcare information market research firm IMS Health.

“Despite the rapid growth of Sub-Saharan Africa and the demand for innovative therapies,

drugmakers have been limited in their efforts to enter these markets because of the complexity of doing business in the region,” Dr. Bairu says. “With our expertise in clinical development, regulation, pricing, reimbursement, distribution, pharmacovigilance, and our deep relationships in Africa, we are positioned to help our partners capitalize on the opportunities in the Sub-Saharan region and bring needed therapies to improve the health of people who live there.”

Serenus has assembled an executive management team with extensive biopharmaceutical industry experience in the United States, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, positioning itself as the partner of choice for biopharmaceutical companies interested in expanding access to their novel therapies in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The Serenus model is to partner with biopharmaceutical companies to make new therapies available to the people of the African continent much sooner while opening up new markets for intellectual property holders.

▼ For more information, visit www.serenusbio.com

Chandler Chicco Companies Launches Change Engagement Practice



Briana Sharp

Global health communications group Chandler Chicco Companies (CCC), part of Inventiv Health, has launched its Dynamic Change Engagement practice. This new practice leverages proprietary methodology based on best practices from models of human behavior and change management to help life-sciences companies manage the continuous change in today's health marketplace.

Change engagement, as a business practice, aims to facilitate organizational transitions.

Dynamic Change Engagement combines the agency's deep expertise in communications with leading behavioral theory to create a more positive environment for change. The methodology also helps companies accelerate adoption of new behaviors, reduce loss of productivity associated with changes, and deepen engagement with employees. All of this leads to companies with better organizational health.

"In an industry undergoing profound transformation, change is the new normal," said Lisa Stockman, president of Chandler Chicco Companies. "Whether the company is preparing for a merger, absorbing a new sales force or expanding into a challenging new market, our clients need effective communications that meet employees where they are and help them embrace change."

Briana Sharp, who was hired to lead the new practice, brings nearly 20 years of experience leading organizations through complex change, including mergers and acquisitions.

▼ For more information, visit www.chandlerchiccocompanies.com

Flagship Ventures Commences Its Sixth VentureLabs Fellowship Program Focused On Entrepreneurial Innovation

Flagship Ventures, a venture capital and venture creation firm focused on healthcare and sustainability, has launched its sixth VentureLabs Fellowship Program, a unique opportunity for top graduate and post-graduate students to learn VentureLabs' approach to company conception, innovation, and entrepreneuring.

This year VentureLabs welcomes 11 talented fellows who will work hand-in-hand with the VentureLabs team over a 12-week period to explore disruptive opportunities in life sciences.


"Over the past six years we have continually attracted exceptional students who are interested in learning our company creation process and supporting our partners in developing new ventures," says Harry Wilcox, chief operating officer and general partner of Flagship Ventures. "This is an important program for VentureLabs, allowing us to expand our reach as we create innovative companies."

The fellows include engineers and scientists who are pursuing, or have recently completed advanced educational degrees, all with entrepreneurial and technical experience aimed at life sciences.

Many former fellows have gone on to become members of the VentureLabs team, leaders at Flagship portfolio companies, and successful entrepreneurs.

This year the Fellowship program saw a record number of applicants from universities around the

world. The fellows represent leading graduate programs at Harvard, MIT, Stanford and Princeton, among others and possess varied technical and business backgrounds, skills and interests

▼ For more information, visit www.flagshipventures.com/venturelabs. 

AROUND THE GLOBE

Abbott plans to acquire Veropharm, a leading Russian pharmaceutical manufacturer.

Through this acquisition Abbott will obtain a portfolio of medicines that is well aligned with its current pharmaceutical therapeutic areas of focus in women's health, central nervous system, cardiovascular, and gastroenterology, while also adding an offering in the field of oncology.

▼ For more information, visit abbott-russia.ru or abbott.com.

Endo International has agreed to acquire Dava Pharmaceuticals, a privately held company specializing in marketed, pre-launch, and pipeline generic pharmaceuticals, for \$575 million in cash, with additional cash consideration of up to \$25 million contingent on the achievement of certain sales milestones.

Dava has a promising product pipeline across a multitude of therapeutic categories, including recent launches of generic Doxycycline and Cefdinir. The company also expects more than five products to be launched in 2015, and more than 20 additional products to be launched over the next several years.

▼ For more information, visit endo.com.