Kura Oncology Presents Preclinical Data Demonstrating Significant Anti-Tumor Activity of KO-947 and KO-539

April 5, 2017

LA JOLLA, Calif., April 05, 2017 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Kura Oncology, Inc. (NASDAQ:KURA), a clinical stage biopharmaceutical company focused on the development of precision medicines for oncology, today announced the presentation of preclinical data for KO-947, its development candidate targeting the ERK1/2 kinases, and KO-539, its development candidate targeting the menin-MLL interaction, at the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) Annual Meeting 2017.

“We are progressing multiple programs aimed at addressing the urgent needs of cancer patients facing a poor prognosis and limited treatment options,” said Troy Wilson, Ph.D., J.D., President and CEO of Kura Oncology. “The data presented today illustrate that KO-947 and KO-539 demonstrate significant anti-tumor activity in preclinical models, supporting their continued advancement as potential therapeutics.”

About KO-947

KO-947 is a potent and selective inhibitor of ERK1/2 kinases, which are critical components of the MAPK pathway. Aberrant signaling caused by mutations or dysregulation of the MAPK pathway are frequent contributors to the development of cancer and are associated with numerous tumor types, including lung, colorectal and pancreatic adenocarcinomas and squamous cell carcinomas. Although small molecule inhibitors of BRAF and MEK have demonstrated clinical activity in selected patients, duration of response has been limited, and resistance is often associated with reactivation of the MAPK signaling pathway. In preclinical studies presented at AACR, KO-947 demonstrated prolonged inhibition of the MAPK pathway. Durable tumor regression was observed in preclinical cell line and patient derived xenograft models, including KRAS- and BRAF-mutant adenocarcinomas and squamous cell carcinomas lacking BRAF/RAS mutations, when KO-947 was administered on schedules ranging from daily to once weekly. Kura anticipates initiating a Phase 1 clinical trial for KO-947 in 1H 2017.

About KO-539

KO-539 is a potent and selective inhibitor of the interaction between the menin protein and the MLL fusion proteins, which characterize MLL leukemias. MLL-rearranged leukemia patients typically have a poor prognosis with a 5-year survival rate estimated to be 40%. As the leukemogenic activity of MLL fusion proteins has been shown to be dependent on their direct interaction with menin, the development of small molecules that block the menin-MLL interaction is a promising therapeutic strategy for the treatment of this disease. In preclinical studies presented at AACR, KO-539 demonstrated robust, sustained tumor regressions in multiple aggressive models of MLL-rearranged leukemias that correlated with modulation of target gene expression. KO-539 has been nominated as a development candidate, and further efforts are currently underway to assess potential utility of menin-MLL inhibitors in additional hematological malignancies and solid tumor indications.

About Kura Oncology

Kura Oncology is a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company committed to realizing the promise of precision medicines for the treatment of cancer. The company’s pipeline consists of small molecule drug candidates that target cancer signaling pathways where there is a strong scientific and clinical rationale to improve outcomes by identifying those patients most likely to benefit from treatment. Kura Oncology’s lead drug candidate is tipifarnib, a farnesyl transferase inhibitor, which is currently being studied in multiple Phase 2 clinical trials. The pipeline includes KO-947, an ERK inhibitor, and KO-539, an inhibitor of the menin-MLL protein-protein interaction. For additional information about Kura Oncology, please visit the company’s website at www.kuraoncology.com.

Forward Looking Statements

This news release contains certain forward-looking statements that involve risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to be materially different from historical results or from any future results expressed or implied by such forward-looking statements. Such forward-looking statements include statements regarding, among other things, the potential activity, tolerability and utility of KO-947 and KO-539, the conduct, results and timing of pre-clinical studies and clinical trials and plans regarding future research and development activities. Factors that may cause actual results to differ materially include the risk that compounds that appeared promising in early research or clinical trials do not demonstrate safety and/or efficacy in later preclinical studies or clinical trials, the risk that Kura Oncology may not obtain approval to market its product candidates, uncertainties associated with regulatory filings and applications, the risks associated with reliance on outside financing to meet capital requirements, and the risks associated with reliance on third parties to successfully conduct clinical trials within and outside the United States and for development and commercialization of product candidates. You are urged to consider statements that include the words "may," "will," "would," "could," "should," "believes," "estimates," "projects," "promise, " "potential," "expects," "plans," "anticipates," "intends," "continues," "designed," "goal," or the negative of those words or other comparable words to be uncertain and forward-looking. For a further list and description of the risks and uncertainties the Company faces, please refer to the Company's periodic and other filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission, which are available at www.sec.gov. Such forward-looking statements are current only as of the date they are made, and Kura Oncology assumes no obligation to update any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise.

CONTACT INFORMATION

INVESTOR CONTACT:

Robert H. Uhl
Managing Director
Westwicke Partners, LLC
(858) 356-5932
robert.uhl@westwicke.com

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS CONTACT:
Mark Corbae
Vice President
Canale Communications
(619) 849-5375
mark@canalecomm.com

Kura Oncology, Inc.