Molecular Partners Announces Publication of Preclinical Data from CD40 Therapeutic Candidate MP0317 in Cancer Immunology Research

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ZURICH-SCHLIEREN, Switzerland and CONCORD, Mass., March 24, 2022 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Molecular Partners AG (SIX: MOLN; NASDAQ: MOLN), a clinical-stage biotech company developing a new class of custom-built protein drugs known as DARPin therapeutics, today announced the publication of preclinical data from MP0317 in *Cancer Immunology Research*, a journal of the American Association for Cancer Research. MP0317 is the Company's second immuno-oncology program to enter clinical studies and is designed to target both FAP (fibroblast activation protein), a protein found in high density around tumors, and the immunostimulatory protein CD40, to enable tumor-localized immune activation.

The CD40 receptor, which is expressed on dendritic cells, B cells and macrophages, is an attractive target for cancer immunotherapy. However, administration of CD40-targeting monoclonal antibodies has challenges with achieving a meaningful clinical response. Low concentrations result in minimal efficacy, but higher concentrations rapidly lead to systemic toxicity, limiting the therapeutic window achievable with systemic CD40 activation. The DARPin therapeutic candidate MP0317 is designed to specifically induce CD40-mediated immune activation only in the FAP-rich local tumor environment, preventing systemic immune activation.

The published study confirms that MP0317 is inducing FAP-dependent CD40-mediated B and myeloid cell activation, thus supporting the candidate intended mechanism of action of tumor-localized immune activation without the systemic toxicity observed with other CD40-targeting agents. This study suggests that MP0317, as a DARPin therapeutic candidate, has the potential for a broader therapeutic window and thus improved clinical activity compared to CD40 agonist antibodies. The publication can be found in this link.

MP0317 is currently being tested in a Phase 1 clinical trial sponsored by the Company. The open-label dose escalation study is designed to assess the safety and tolerability as well as pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics of MP0317 as a monotherapy in patients with solid tumors known to express FAP. In addition to evaluating monotherapy dynamics, the study will gather biomarker data to support the establishment of combination studies of MP0317 with other therapies in specific indications.

Initial data from the ongoing Phase 1 clinical trial are expected in the second half of 2022.

About Molecular Partners AG
Molecular Partners AG is a clinical-stage biotech company developing DARPin therapeutics, a new class of custom-built protein drugs designed to address challenges current modalities cannot. The Company has formed partnerships with leading pharmaceutical companies to advance DARPin therapeutics in the areas of ophthalmology, oncology and infectious disease, and has compounds in various stages of clinical and preclinical development across multiple therapeutic areas. www.molecularpartners.com; Find us on Twitter - @MolecularPrtnrs

Cautionary Note Regarding Forward-Looking Statements
Any statements contained in this press release that do not describe historical facts may constitute forward-looking statements as that term is defined in the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995, as amended, including, without limitation, implied and express statements regarding the clinical development of Molecular Partners' current or future product candidates, including expectations regarding timing of clinical trial data, and the potential therapeutic and clinical benefits of Molecular Partners' product candidates. These statements may be identified by words such as "expect", "may", "plan", "potential", "will", "would" and similar expressions, and are based on Molecular Partners' current beliefs and expectations. These statements involve risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from those reflected in such statements. Some of the key factors that could cause actual results to differ from Molecular Partners' expectations include Molecular Partners' ongoing and planned clinical trials and preclinical studies for Molecular Partners' product candidates, including the timing of such trials and studies; the risk that the results of preclinical studies and clinical trials may not be predictive of future results in connection with future clinical trials; the timing of and Molecular Partners' ability to obtain and maintain regulatory approvals for Molecular Partners' product candidates; the extent of clinical trials potentially required for Molecular Partners' product candidates; Molecular Partners' plans to develop and potentially commercialize Molecular Partners' product candidates; the clinical utility and ability to achieve market acceptance of Molecular Partners' product candidates; the potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Molecular Partners' operations or clinical trials; Molecular Partners' plans and development of any new indications for Molecular Partners' product candidates; Molecular Partners' commercialization, marketing and manufacturing capabilities and strategy; Molecular Partners' intellectual property position; Molecular Partners' ability to identify and in-license additional product candidates; Molecular Partners' reliance on third party partners and collaborators over which we may not always have full control; and other risks and uncertainties that are described in the Risk Factors section of Molecular Partners' Annual Report on Form 20-F for the year ended December 31, 2021, filed with the SEC on March 15, 2022, and other filings Molecular Partners makes with the SEC. These documents are available on the Investors page of Molecular Partners' website at http://www.molecularpartners.com. Any forward-looking statements speak only as of the date of this press release and are based on information available to Molecular Partners as of the date of this release, and except to the extent required by law, Molecular Partners assumes no obligation to, and does not intend to, update any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise.

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