



Metacrine Appoints Pharmaceutical Business and R&D Executive, Preston Klassen, M.D., MHS, as President and Chief Executive Officer

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John McHutchison, AO, M.D., Appointed to Board of Directors Adding Significant Industry Experience and Drug Development Expertise

SAN DIEGO, June 09, 2020 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Metacrine, Inc., a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company focused on discovering and developing best-in-class drugs to treat patients with liver and gastrointestinal diseases, today announced the appointment of Preston Klassen, M.D., MHS as President and Chief Executive Officer. Dr. Klassen joins Metacrine from Arena Pharmaceuticals, bringing more than 20 years of leadership experience in product development. In addition, John McHutchison, AO, M.D., Chief Executive Officer and President of Assembly Biosciences, has been appointed to the company's Board of Directors.

"This is an exciting time for Metacrine as we advance the clinical development of both MET409 and MET642 for patients with non-alcoholic steatohepatitis, or NASH, for whom there are no approved therapies today," said Dr. Klassen. "In the last several years, Metacrine has designed novel and proprietary FXR clinical product candidates that hold the potential to be best-in-class treatments for NASH and potential treatments for a variety of metabolic and inflammatory diseases. I am delighted to join this highly talented team to advance innovative drug candidates and improve the health of patients worldwide."

Prior to Metacrine, Dr. Klassen was Executive Vice President, Head of Research and Development at Arena Pharmaceuticals, where he oversaw development of multiple early and late-stage clinical programs and contributed to its successful corporate transformation over the past few years. Before Arena, he served as Chief Medical Officer of Laboratoris Sanifit S.L., a biotechnology company, and prior to that was Executive Vice President, Head of Global Development at Orexigen Therapeutics, Inc. Earlier in his career, Dr. Klassen held several positions of increasing responsibility at Amgen Inc., including Therapeutic Area Head for Nephrology. Prior to joining Amgen, he was a faculty member in the Division of Nephrology at Duke University Medical Center. Dr. Klassen received his M.D. from the University of Nebraska College of Medicine and completed his residency in internal medicine, fellowship in nephrology, and masters in health sciences degree at Duke University.

"Preston's extensive experience in advancing products through late-stage clinical development and commercialization will be invaluable to Metacrine, and we are thrilled to have him at the helm to lead the company through the next phase of its evolution," said Richard Heyman, Ph.D., Chairman of the Metacrine Board of Directors. "We are also delighted to welcome John to the Board. He brings a track record of accomplishments in drug development and approvals, as well as deep knowledge of liver disease biology."

Dr. Heyman continued, "We greatly appreciate the significant contributions by Ken Song over the last four years and look forward to his continued involvement as a senior advisor to Metacrine as we continue to advance our leading FXR agonist pipeline."

Dr. McHutchison serves as Chief Executive Officer and President and Director of Assembly Biosciences, Inc. Previously, he was Chief Scientific Officer and Head of Research and Development at Gilead Sciences, Inc. Under his leadership, Gilead developed five medicines that are now prescribed around the world for the curative treatment of chronic hepatitis C and the treatment of chronic hepatitis B. Prior to Gilead, Dr. McHutchison held numerous positions at Duke University Medical Center, most recently as Associate Director of the Duke Clinical Research Institute. In June 2018, Dr. McHutchison was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia in recognition of his distinguished service to medical research in gastroenterology and hepatology. Dr. McHutchison received undergraduate degrees in medicine and surgery from the University of Melbourne in Australia and completed his residency in internal medicine and fellowship in gastroenterology at the Royal Melbourne Hospital. He is a member of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians.

About Metacrine

Metacrine is a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company building a potentially best-in-class pipeline of drugs to treat liver and gastrointestinal (GI) diseases. The company's most advanced programs, MET409 and MET642, target the farnesoid X receptor (FXR), which is central to modulating liver and GI diseases. Both MET409 and MET642 are currently being investigated in clinical trials as a potential new treatment for non-alcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH). For additional information, please visit www.metacrine.com.

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