



Metacrine Raises \$36 Million in Series A Financing

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Appoints Neil McDonnell, CEO, Along with Executive Team and Board

San Diego, CA – Metacrine, Inc., a biotechnology company focused on targeting metabolic disease through advances in endocrine research, today announced it has raised \$36 million in a Series A financing. The financing included participation from Arch Venture Partners, EcoR1 Capital, Polaris Partners and venBio. Metacrine also announced the appointment of Neil McDonnell as chief executive officer and the formation of a senior leadership team and board of directors led by Executive Chairman Richard Heyman. Heyman is a co-founder of Metacrine along with Ronald Evans, and Michael Downes.

Metacrine is advancing technology licensed from the laboratory of Evans, a world leader in nuclear hormone receptors and Howard Hughes Medical Institute Investigator and director of the Gene Expression Laboratory at the Salk Institute. Metacrine will leverage the discoveries and exclusively licensed intellectual property of the Evans lab to develop two classes of novel therapeutics, to target diabetes, non-alcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH) and other metabolic diseases and liver disorders.

"Metacrine is dedicated to advancing the pioneering research in nuclear hormone receptors generated by Ron Evans" said McDonnell. "With the support of our investors and founders – Ron Evans, Richard Heyman and Michael Downes – we have assembled a proven leadership team to advance our programs."

Joining the Metacrine leadership team are Trisha Millican, chief financial officer; Nicholas Smith, Ph.D., senior vice president, chemistry; and Eric Bischoff, vice president, business operations. All three previously served in senior management roles at Seragon Pharmaceuticals, acquired by Genentech/Roche, and Aragon Pharmaceuticals, acquired by Johnson & Johnson.

Commented Dr. Heyman, "There is great potential in the advancement of therapeutics arising from research on endocrine signaling pathways that govern metabolic homeostasis, and Metacrine is poised to make an impact in advancing some novel therapies in this area."

McDonnell previously served as senior vice president and therapeutic area leader for cardiovascular and metabolic diseases at Takeda. He has driven R&D programs through FDA approval and been involved in the development of diabetes drugs Nesina (alogliptin), Oseni (alogliptin + pioglitazone), and Kazano (alogliptin + metformin), and with Takeda's partner Orexigen, the obesity drug Contrave (bupropion and naltrexone). McDonnell began his career in healthcare as a clinical pharmacist in hematology/oncology and gynecologic oncology at the University of Washington Medical Center. He received a B.S. in Pharmacy and a Doctorate in Pharmacy from the University of Washington. He completed a residency at the University of Washington Medical Centers. Prior to Takeda, he held positions at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, ZymoGenetics, and Immunex.

Evans is an authority on nuclear hormone receptors and metabolic disease. He is known for his discoveries of nuclear receptors and the mechanism of hormone signaling and has applied this knowledge to further enhance the treatment of disease such as obesity, diabetes and cancer. Evans serves as an independent director on the Metacrine board.

Heyman previously served as CEO of Seragon Pharmaceuticals and Aragon Pharmaceuticals. Additional Metacrine board members include Robert Adelman, M.D., of venBio; Kristina Burow of ARCH Venture Partners; and Amir Nashat of Polaris Partners.

Therapeutic Need in Diabetes and NASH

There are over 30 million type 2 diabetics in the United States and despite numerous available drugs, close to 50 percent of patients are unable to achieve target HbA1c levels and glucose control. Similarly, NASH is reaching epidemic proportions in the U.S. and worldwide, with nearly 20 percent of Americans having some stage of fatty liver disease. Currently, there is no approved therapy for NASH. Both diseases are associated with insulin resistance, inflammation and obesity.

About Metacrine

Metacrine is a privately-held biotechnology company headquartered in San Diego, CA. The company is focused on advancing research in nuclear hormone receptors for treatment of metabolic diseases originated at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies.

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