



February 7, 2017

## Conatus Pharmaceuticals Appoints William R. LaRue as Independent Board Member

SAN DIEGO, Feb. 07, 2017 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Conatus Pharmaceuticals Inc. (NASDAQ:CNAT) today announced the appointment of William R. LaRue as an additional independent member to the Conatus Board of Directors. Mr. LaRue also will serve as Chair of the Audit Committee.

"We are pleased to strengthen our Board of Directors with the addition of a highly qualified financial executive with extensive experience in corporate finance, SEC reporting, SOX, budgeting, treasury and investor relations," said Steven J. Mento, Ph.D., President and Chief Executive Officer of Conatus. "Bill has raised over \$1 billion in public and private equity, debt and partnership financings. As a member of multiple public and private company boards of directors and executive management teams responsible for corporate leadership and growth strategy, his proven experience with business operations, strategic planning, mergers and acquisitions, corporate collaborations and commercialization should serve us well as we advance with the development of our lead product candidate, emricasan."

### William LaRue

Mr. LaRue joined Cadence Pharmaceuticals, Inc., a biopharmaceutical company, as Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer in June 2006, and expanded his role to serve as Assistant Secretary at Cadence in April 2007, serving in both capacities until the company's acquisition by Mallinckrodt plc in March 2014. At Cadence, Mr. LaRue was a member of the Executive Committee with direct responsibility for the company's financial leadership including corporate financing, investor relations, financial planning and reporting, SEC reporting, accounting, treasury, risk management, tax and information technology. During his tenure, Cadence raised over \$375 million in public and private equity and senior debt, including an IPO in October 2006 as the company transitioned from a development stage to a commercial stage company. Prior to joining Cadence, Mr. LaRue served as the Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of CancerVax Corporation, a biotechnology company, from 2001 until its merger with Micromet, Inc. in May 2006. He served from 2000 to 2001 as the Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of eHelp Corporation, a provider of user assistance software; from 1997 to 2000 as the Vice President and Treasurer of Safeskin Corporation, a medical device company; and from 1993 to 1997 as the Treasurer of GDE Systems, Inc., a high technology electronic systems company. Mr. LaRue currently serves as a member of the Board of Directors and Chair of the Audit Committee of Tracon Pharmaceuticals, Inc., a publicly traded biopharmaceutical company, and as a member of the Board of Directors and Chair of Audit Committee of Applied Proteomics, Inc., a private, venture-backed, molecular diagnostics company. He previously served on the boards of directors of Cadence Pharmaceuticals, Inc. and Neurelis, Inc., a specialty pharmaceutical company. Mr. LaRue received a B.S. in business administration and an M.B.A. from the University of Southern California.

### About Conatus Pharmaceuticals Inc.

Conatus is a biotechnology company focused on the development and commercialization of novel medicines to treat liver disease. Conatus is developing its lead compound, emricasan, for the treatment of patients with chronic liver disease. Emricasan is designed to reduce the activity of enzymes that mediate inflammation and apoptosis. Conatus believes that by reducing the activity of these enzymes, emricasan has the potential to interrupt the disease progression across the spectrum of liver disease. For additional information, please visit [www.conatuspharma.com](http://www.conatuspharma.com).

### Forward-Looking Statements

This press release contains forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended. All statements other than statements of historical facts contained in this press release are forward-looking statements, including statements regarding emricasan's potential to interrupt the disease progression across the spectrum of liver disease. In some cases, you can identify forward-looking statements by terms such as "may," "will," "should," "expect," "plan," "anticipate," "could," "intend," "target," "project," "contemplates," "believes," "estimates," "predicts," "potential" or "continue" or the negative of these terms or other similar expressions. These forward-looking statements speak only as of the date of this press release and are subject to a number of risks, uncertainties and assumptions, including those risks described in the company's prior press releases and in the periodic reports it files with the Securities and Exchange Commission. The events and circumstances reflected in the company's forward-looking statements may not be achieved or occur and actual results could differ materially from those projected in the forward-looking statements. Except as required by applicable law, the company does not plan to publicly update or revise any forward-looking statements contained herein, whether as a result of any new information, future events, changed circumstances or otherwise.

MEDIA: David Schull  
Russo Partners, LLC

(858) 717-2310

David.Schull@RussoPartnersLLC.com

INVESTORS: Alan Engbring

Conatus Pharmaceuticals Inc.

(858) 376-2637

aengbring@conatuspharma.com