



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Merrimack Pharmaceuticals Names Clet Niyikiza, Ph.D. Senior Vice President, Development**

**CAMBRIDGE, Mass., (PRWEB) September 21, 2009** – Merrimack Pharmaceuticals, Inc., announced today that Clet Niyikiza, Ph.D., has joined the company as Senior Vice President, Development. Dr. Niyikiza comes to Merrimack from GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) where he was Vice President and Medicine Development Leader for oncology. Dr. Niyikiza has extensive drug development experience with a career that spans over 18 years in the pharmaceutical industry in which he has led ten New Drug Application teams that have all successfully obtained approvals from U.S. and European regulatory authorities.

“Merrimack is founded on a systems biology approach to drug discovery and development,” says Merrimack President and CEO Robert Mulroy. “Clet’s experience couples a leading knowledge of oncology drug development with a passion for systems approaches to medicine which make him an excellent leader for our teams working on a pipeline of very exciting oncology therapeutics.”

A mathematician by training, Dr. Niyikiza began his pharmaceutical career at Eli Lilly and Company, focusing on applying systems techniques to better understand disease and drug interactions. During his tenure at Lilly, Dr. Niyikiza was credited for playing critical roles in developing many medicines, including two popular anticancer therapies. Dr. Niyikiza used a systems biology approach to identify the previously unknown role of a blood marker which was causing life-threatening toxicities for one of the therapies. The discovery allowed for the successful development of the therapeutic for multiple indications in cancer and was featured on the front page of the *The Wall Street Journal* in 2004.

“The Network Biology approach of understanding the intricate underlying mechanisms of a disease first and then designing a drug based on those complexities has the potential to be hugely beneficial to patients,” says Dr. Niyikiza. “It is that possibility that brought me to Merrimack and makes MM-121 and MM-111 such promising oncology therapeutic candidates.”

Prior to GSK, Dr. Niyikiza held the position of Lilly Research Fellow and Global Oncology Pharmacogenomics Leader at Eli Lilly. He has also worked with Syntex Research and as a Visiting Professor of Mathematics with Indiana University. Dr. Niyikiza received his Doctorate and Masters degrees from Indiana University and a Masters from the African Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics in Kigali, Rwanda.

#### **About Merrimack**

Merrimack Pharmaceuticals, Inc. is a biotechnology company focused on the discovery and development of novel treatments for cancer and autoimmune disease. Its first two oncology pipeline candidates, MM-121 and MM-111, are currently in clinical development. MM-121 and MM-111 are investigational drugs



and have not been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration or any international regulatory agency. The company's proprietary Network Biology discovery platform, developed with the help of leading scientists from MIT and Harvard, enables the high-throughput profiling of protein networks as a basis for improved validation, lead identification and speed in the development of innovative, effective and well-tolerated therapeutics. Merrimack is a privately-held company based in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

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