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Momenta Pharmaceuticals Announces Presentation of Data Supporting Clinical Development of Novel Oncology Drug Candidate M402

Preclinical Data Presented at 2012 ASCO Annual Meeting

CHICAGO, June 4, 2012 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Preclinical data for M402, a novel oncology drug candidate being developed by Momenta Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (Nasdaq:MNTA), showed that M402 in combination with gemcitabine prolonged survival and substantially lowered the incidence of metastasis in two pancreatic cancer models. The data were presented today in a poster presentation at the 2012 American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Annual Meeting in Chicago. The poster presented preclinical data showing the potential of a future clinical approach for the treatment of patients with metastatic pancreatic cancer combining a drug candidate that targets multiple cancer biology pathways with standard of care chemotherapy treatment.

Recent advances in pancreatic cancer research have shown that many heparin-binding factors are involved in tumor progression, including sonic hedgehog, VEGF, FGF-2, PDGF, SDF-1, IGF, and HGF. Momenta developed M402 as a mimetic to heparan sulfate, which are sugar molecules on cell surfaces that regulate growth factors, cytokines, chemokines, and adhesion molecules. By inhibiting the accumulation and activity of these factors at the local sites, M402 has been shown to inhibit tumor progression, adhesion, angiogenesis and metastasis in preclinical studies.

Researchers conducted a series of experiments using two different pancreatic cancer models to test the hypothesis that M402 can modulate tumor progression and metastasis and enhance the efficacy of gemcitabine, a first-line standard of care chemotherapy treatment for pancreatic cancer. The results showed that M402 in combination with gemcitabine was effective in both models, each targeting different mechanisms. Specifically, in a genetically engineered model, M402 inhibited epithelial-to-mesenchymal transition, a mechanism by which tumor cells can revert to a stem cell-like phenotype that is more resistant to chemotherapy. In an orthotopic xenograft model, M402 inhibited desmoplasia, a fibrotic response in the tumor that hinders drug penetration and promotes invasion and also metastasis. The poster, titled: "M402, a Heparan Sulfate Mimetic and Novel Candidate for the Treatment of Pancreatic Cancer," is available on the Momenta website at www.momentapharma.com

"These data provide important insight into the potential clinical benefits of inhibiting multiple signaling pathways with M402, and further support the rationale for the evaluation of this drug candidate in our ongoing Phase 1/2 clinical trial for pancreatic cancer," said James Roach, M.D., Senior Vice President and Chief Medical Officer at Momenta. "These results, as shown in the laboratory, also suggest novel clinical strategies which Momenta may be able to pursue to enhance clinical care in the treatment of a broad range of cancers."

About M402

M402 is a novel heparan sulfate mimetic that binds to multiple growth factors, adhesion molecules and chemokines to inhibit tumor angiogenesis, progression, and metastasis. The use of heparins to treat venous thrombosis in cancer patients has generated numerous reports of antitumor activity; however, the dose of these drugs has been limited by their anticoagulant activity. M402, which is derived from unfractionated heparin, has been engineered to have significantly reduced anticoagulant activity while preserving the relevant antitumor properties of heparin. Ideally, higher doses of M402 could potentially be administered to further enhance these antitumor properties. M402 has the potential to complement conventional chemotherapy, and as M402 has the ability to bind to multiple heparin binding factors, it may play a role in a broad range of cancers. M402 is currently being evaluated in a Phase 1/2 clinical trial for metastatic pancreatic cancer. The trial is evaluating the safety, efficacy, pharmacokinetics, and pharmacodynamics of escalating M402 doses in combination with gemcitabine.

About Pancreatic Cancer

According to the American Cancer Society, in 2012 more than 43,000 people will be diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in the United States, and approximately 37,000 people will die from the disease. Pancreatic cancer has the lowest relative survival rate of any form of cancer. 94% of patients die within five years of diagnosis. Pancreatic cancer is sometimes called a "silent killer" because it does not always cause noticeable symptoms and most symptoms are varied. As a result, pancreatic cancer often is not diagnosed until the disease is too advanced for current treatment options to be effective.

About Momenta

Momenta Pharmaceuticals is a biotechnology company specializing in the detailed structural analysis of complex mixture drugs and is headquartered in Cambridge, MA. Momenta is applying its technology to the development of generic versions of complex drug products, as well as to the discovery and development of novel drugs.

To receive additional information about Momenta, please visit the website at www.momentapharma.com, which does not form a part of this press release.

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Special Note Regarding Forward-Looking Statements

Statements in this press release regarding management's future expectations, beliefs, intentions, goals, strategies, plans or prospects, including statements relating to the timing of M402 development, clinical research and the clinical and efficacy potential of M402, are forward-looking statements within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Forward-looking statements can be identified by terminology such as "anticipate," "believe," "could," "could increase the likelihood," "hope," "target," "project," "goals," "potential," "predict," "might," "estimate," "expect," "intend," "is planned," "may," "should," "will," "will enable," "would be expected," "look forward," "may provide," "would" or similar terms, variations of such terms or the negative of those terms. Such forward-looking statements involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors referred to in the Company's Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended March 31, 2012 filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission under the section "Risk Factors," as well as other documents that may be filed by Momenta from time to time with the Securities and Exchange Commission. As a result of such risks, uncertainties and factors, the Company's actual results may differ materially from any future results, performance or achievements discussed in or implied by the forward-looking statements contained herein. Momenta is providing the information in this press release as of this date and assumes no obligations to update the information included in this press release or revise any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise.

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