Kite Pharma Expands Collaboration With Netherlands Cancer Institute (NKI)

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SANTA MONICA, Calif., Sept. 14, 2015 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Kite Pharma, Inc. (Kite) (Nasdaq:KITE) today announced that it has expanded its collaboration with the Netherlands Cancer Institute(NKI). Kite and the NKI have entered into an agreement under which Kite will receive from the NKI the exclusive option to license multiple T cell receptor (TCR) gene sequences for the development and commercialization of cancer immunotherapy candidates targeting solid tumors. Kite has also expanded its access to additional resources and research facilities through a master services agreement with the NKI.

"We are excited with the progress of the TCR research programs with Kite and look forward to further advancements of the programs and our collaboration," said Professor René Medema, Director of NKI. "NKI believes that TCR technologies hold great potential for cancer care, and we are committed to making these new therapies a reality for patients."

Kite Pharma EU, based in Amsterdam, will be conducting preclinical research related to candidates under the agreement with NKI. Kite Pharma EU is comprised of a leading team of immuno-oncology researchers and collaborators, including Professor Dr. Ton N. M. Schumacher, who serves as Chief Scientific Officer of Kite Pharma EU. Professor Dr. Schumacher, a pioneer in T cell biology and gene therapy, is a developer of Kite's proprietary TCR-GENErator™ discovery platform, an industry-leading R&D engine for rapid, high-throughput identification of TCR-based product candidates.

"With Kite Pharma EU, we have established a central hub of cancer immunotherapy efforts in Europe, attracting leading scientific experts, researchers and collaborators in this field," said Arie Belldegrun, M.D., FACS, Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer of Kite. "Kite's relationship with the NKI, an internationally renowned cancer research and clinical institution, provides an important operational platform, as we advance TCR-based immuno-oncology product candidates."

About Kite Pharma, Inc.

Kite Pharma, Inc., is a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company engaged in the development of novel cancer immunotherapy products, with a primary focus on engineered autologous cell therapy (eACT™) designed to restore the immune system's ability to recognize and eradicate tumors. Kite is based in Santa Monica, CA. For more information on Kite Pharma, please visit www.kitepharma.com.

Kite Pharma, Inc. Forward-Looking Statements

This press release contains forward-looking statements for purposes of the safe harbor provisions of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. The press release may, in some cases, use terms such as "predicts," "believes," "potential," "proposed," "continue," "estimates," "anticipates," "expects," "plans," "intends," "may," "could," "might," "will," "should" or other words that convey uncertainty of future events or outcomes to identify these forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements include statements regarding intentions, beliefs, projections, outlook, analyses or current expectations concerning, among other things: the ability to advance, and the success of, TCR-based product candidates. Various factors may cause differences between Kite's expectations and actual results as discussed in greater detail in Kite's filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission, including without limitation in its Form 10-Q for the quarter ended June 30, 2015. Any forward-looking statements that are made in this press release speak only as of the date of this press release. Kite assumes no obligation to update the forward-looking statements whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise, after the date of this press release.

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