

Testing of anti-viral for treating COVID-19

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Open Orphan PLC
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Open Orphan plc

("Open Orphan" or the "Company")

Testing of anti-viral for treating COVID-19 underway

Open Orphan plc (ORPH) the rapidly growing specialist CRO pharmaceutical services company which has a focus on orphan drugs and is a world leader in the provision of virology and vaccine challenge study services, is pleased to announce that its London-based subsidiary hVIVO has commenced the testing of an anti-viral for treating COVID-19 on behalf of its client Nearmedic International Ltd.

hVIVO has initiated work on this contract with Nearmedic International Ltd, a specialist pharmaceutical, biotechnological and medical business headquartered in Moscow, to test using hVIVO's virology expertise and laboratory capability an anti-viral drug with potential utility for treating SARS-CoV2 (COVID-19) infections. This drug has both potential anti-viral and anti-inflammatory activity and as such could reduce both virus infectivity and disease severity respectively.

hVIVO will be testing its utility against a panel of viruses to include influenza virus, "normal", circulating betacoronavirus and ultimately SARS-CoV2 (COVID-19).

Cathal Friel, Executive Chairman of Open Orphan, commented:

"We are very happy to be assisting in the battle against Covid-19 and are delighted to be working with Nearmedic International Ltd. hVIVO is a world leading provider of services to global vaccine and antiviral development companies and our scientists have considerable knowledge from previous anti-viral trials which gives us confidence in our testing. We look forward to updating the market on a regular basis in the weeks and months ahead."

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Notes to Editors:

Open Orphan is a rapidly growing specialist CRO pharmaceutical services company which has a focus on orphan drugs and is a world leader in the provision of virology and vaccine challenge study services and viral laboratory services. It has Europe's only 24-bedroom quarantine clinic with onsite virology lab in Queen Mary's Hospital London. hVIVO supports product development for customers developing antivirals, vaccines and respiratory therapeutics, all particularly relevant and topical in the environment of heightened awareness of Covid-19 in 2020. The Company also has a leading portfolio of 8 viral challenge study models which are: 2 FLU, 2 RSV, 1 HRV, 1 Asthma, 1 cough and 1 COPD viral challenge models. As announced in early March, Open Orphan is rapidly advancing a Coronavirus challenge study model and expects to be very active with many companies in the development of a Covid-19 vaccine. No other company in the world has such a portfolio, with only two competitors globally having 1 challenge study model each.

Open Orphan comprises of two commercial specialist CRO services businesses (Venn and hVIVO) and is developing an early stage orphan drug genomics data platform business. This platform captures valuable genetic data from patient populations with specific diseases with designated orphan drug status and incorporating AI tools. In June 2019, Open Orphan acquired AIM-listed Venn Life Sciences Holdings plc in a reverse take-over and in January 2020 it completed the merger with hVIVO plc. Venn, as an integrated drug development consultancy, offers CMC (chemistry, manufacturing and controls), preclinical, Phase I & II clinical trials design and execution. The merger with hVIVO created a European full pharma services company broadening the Company's customer base and with complementary specialist CRO services, widened the range of the Company's service offerings.

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