

Ionis appoints C. Frank Bennett, Ph.D., to chief scientific officer and promotes Eric E. Swayze, Ph.D., to senior vice president of research

December 18, 2019

New appointments effective January 1, 2020

CARLSBAD, Calif., Dec. 18, 2019 /PRNewswire/ -- Ionis Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (Nasdaq: IONS), the leader in RNA-targeted therapeutics, today announced the appointments of C. Frank Bennett, Ph.D., as chief scientific officer, and Eric E. Swayze, Ph.D., as senior vice president of research, effective January 1, 2020.

In his new role, Dr. Bennett will lead a new program to identify technologies to enhance Ionis' drug discovery programs as well as, identify potentially new therapeutic platforms. Additionally, Dr. Bennett will continue in his current role as Franchise Leader for Neurology Drug Discovery and serve as a senior strategic advisor to Ionis' research and development programs.

"As a world-class scientist who contributed to the founding of Ionis and its antisense technology, and the discovery of many important medicines like Spinraza, Frank helped to create a better, more efficient drug discovery platform and one of the most innovative, scientifically-driven biotechnology companies of our time," said Brett P. Monia, Ph. D., chief operating officer, Ionis Pharmaceuticals. "Ionis and patients have benefited greatly from Frank's visionary leadership and I look forward to even more exciting breakthroughs in his new role."

Dr. Bennett is one of the founding members of Ionis and has been involved in the development of antisense oligonucleotides as therapeutic agents, including research on the application of oligonucleotides for inflammatory, neurodegenerative diseases and cancer, oligonucleotide delivery, pharmacokinetics and medicinal chemistry. He was the co-recipient of the 2019 Breakthrough Prize in Life Sciences for his contributions to the discovery and development of SPINRAZA® (nusinersen). He also was the winner of the 2018 Hereditary Disease Foundation's Leslie Gehry Brenner Prize for Innovation in Science for his leadership and continued commitment to developing antisense therapies for Huntington's disease (HD). Dr. Bennett has published more than 230 papers in the field of antisense research and development, and he is an inventor on more than 175 issued patents.

Dr. Swayze will succeed Dr. Bennett as senior vice president of research. He will be responsible for leading preclinical antisense drug discovery and antisense technology research. Dr. Swayze joined Ionis in 1994 and has led Research Chemistry through key technology advancements such as Ionis' Generation 2.5 chemistry and Ligand-Conjugated Antisense (LICA) technology. Since 2012, Dr. Swayze has led the neuroscience drug discovery group, which has advanced multiple programs to clinical development including potential treatments for HD, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), frontotemporal dementia, Alzheimer's disease, and many other neurological disease programs. Dr. Swayze is an author on more than 150 scientific manuscripts, several reviews and book chapters, and is an inventor of more than 140 issued US patents.

"Eric is an outstanding example of the deep scientific leadership at Ionis. His innovative scientific contributions have been seminal in the creation of our leading medicinal chemistry program in RNA-targeted therapeutics and in our premier neurology drug discovery program. I am looking forward to working with Eric in his newly expanded role and am confident that he will continue to advance the outstanding science being done at Ionis, which will benefit patients for many years to come," said Dr. Monia.

ABOUT IONIS PHARMACEUTICALS, INC.

As the leader in RNA-targeted drug discovery and development, Ionis has created an efficient, broadly applicable, drug discovery platform called antisense technology that can treat diseases where no other therapeutic approaches have proven effective. Our drug discovery platform has served as a springboard for actionable promise and realized hope for patients with unmet needs. We created the first and only approved treatment for children and adults with spinal muscular atrophy as well as the world's first RNA-targeted therapeutic approved for the treatment of polyneuropathy in adults with hereditary transthyretin amyloidosis. Our sights are set on all the patients we have yet to reach with a pipeline of more than 40 novel medicines designed to treat a broad range of diseases including cardiovascular diseases, neurological diseases, infectious diseases, pulmonary diseases and cancer.

To learn more about Ionis visit www.ionispharma.com and follow us on twitter @ionispharma.

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