Verastem to Present Scientific Data Supporting FAK Inhibition in Combination with Immune Checkpoint Inhibitors at Immunotherapy World 2016

January 21, 2016

BOSTON--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Jan. 21, 2016-- Verastem, Inc. (NASDAQ:VSTM), focused on discovering and developing drugs to treat cancer, today announced the presentation of preclinical data and participation in an expert panel at Immunotherapy World 2016 being held January 25-27, 2016 in Washington, DC.

“Over the past couple of years, exciting data have emerged from several research groups demonstrating the importance of FAK inhibition in the immuno-oncology arsenal,” said Dr. Jonathan Pachter, Verastem Head of Research. “Our presentation next week at Immunotherapy World 2016 will provide an overview of preclinical research to date demonstrating how FAK inhibition increases influx of cytotoxic T cells into tumors while reducing immuno-suppressive and stromal density barriers to anti-tumor immune attack. This creates a more favorable tumor microenvironment for the antitumor effects of immune checkpoint inhibitors and potentially other immunotherapies. Preclinical models have demonstrated extended survival with the combination of our FAK inhibitor with anti-PD-1 therapy, and we plan to test this hypothesis clinically in several tumor types and combinations in 2016. The first of such clinical trials was recently started at Washington University of Saint Louis in patients with advanced pancreatic cancer.”

The Washington University of Saint Louis clinical trial is evaluating Verastem’s focal adhesion kinase (FAK) inhibitor VS-6063 in combination with Merck’s PD-1 inhibitor pembrolizumab and gemcitabine/Nab-paclitaxel in patients with pancreatic cancer. This clinical study is supported by a growing body of preclinical research suggesting that focal adhesion kinase (FAK) inhibition, when combined with PD-1 inhibitors, increases the anti-tumor activity of these immunotherapeutic agents. As published in the journal *Cell* (24 Sept 2015), FAK inhibition has been shown to increase cytotoxic (CD8+) T cells in tumors and decrease immunosuppressive T regulatory cells leading to full tumor regression. This is the first of several combination clinical trials Verastem expects to initiate this year.

Details for the Immunotherapy World 2016 events are as follows:

Oral Presentation

Title: FAK Inhibitors induce T cell-mediated tumor regression: Prospects for combination with checkpoint inhibitors

Date and time: Monday, January 25, 2016, 3:00 pm ET

Session: Focus Session 3: Next generation approaches to Immuno-oncology: Investigative Therapies, Tools and Tech

A copy of the oral presentation will be available following the presentation at http://bit.ly/R3M6wc

Expert Panel

Title: Moving beyond the first generation of immunotherapies

Date and time: Monday, January 25, 2016, 3:30 pm ET

Session: Focus Session 3: Next generation approaches to Immuno-oncology: Investigative Therapies, Tools and Tech

About Focal Adhesion Kinase

Focal Adhesion Kinase (FAK) is a non-receptor tyrosine kinase encoded by the PTK-2 gene that is involved in cellular adhesion and metastatic capability. VS-6063 (defactinib) and VS-4718 are orally available compounds designed to target cancer stem cells through the potent inhibition of FAK. Cancer stem cells are an underlying cause of tumor resistance to chemotherapy, recurrence and ultimate disease progression. Research has demonstrated that FAK activity is critical for the growth and survival of cancer stem cells. VS-6063 and VS-4718 are currently being studied in multiple clinical trials for their ability to improve patient survival through the targeting of cancer stem cells, potentiation of an immune response against cancer cells and reduction of the stromal density encapsulating a tumor.

About Verastem, Inc.

Verastem, Inc. (NASDAQ:VSTM) is discovering and developing drugs to treat cancer by the targeted killing of cancer stem cells. Cancer stem cells are an underlying cause of tumor recurrence and metastasis. Verastem is developing small molecule inhibitors of signaling pathways that are critical to cancer stem cell survival and proliferation: FAK and PI3K/mTOR. For more information, please visit www.verastem.com.

Verastem forward-looking statements notice:

This press release includes forward-looking statements about Verastem’s strategy, future plans and prospects, including statements regarding the development and activity of Verastem’s product candidates, VS-6063, VS-4718 and VS-5584, and Verastem’s FAK, PI3K/mTOR and diagnostics programs generally, the utility of FAK inhibitors for the treatment of cancer, the timeline for clinical development and regulatory approval of our product candidates, the structure of our planned or pending clinical trials, our rights to develop or commercialize our product candidates and our ability to finance contemplated development activities and fund operations for a specified period. The words “anticipate,” “appear,” “believe,” “estimate,” “expect,” “intend,” “may,” “plan,” “predict,” “project,” “target,” “potential,” “will,” “would,” “could,” “should,” “continue,” and similar expressions are intended to identify forward-looking statements, although not all forward-looking statements contain these identifying words. Each forward-looking statement is subject to risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from those expressed or implied in such statement.

Applicable risks and uncertainties include the risks that the preclinical testing of Verastem's product candidates and preliminary or interim data from clinical trials may not be predictive of the results or success of ongoing or later clinical trials, that data may not be available when we expect it to be, that enrollment of clinical trials may take longer than expected, that our product candidates will cause unexpected safety events, that Verastem will be unable to successfully initiate or complete the clinical development of its product candidates, that the development of Verastem's product candidates will take longer or cost more than planned, and that Verastem's product candidates will not receive regulatory approval or become commercially successful products. Other risks and uncertainties include those identified under the heading "Risk Factors" in Verastem's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2014, Verastem's Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended September 30, 2015 and in any subsequent SEC filings. The forward-looking statements contained in this press release reflect Verastem's current views with respect to future events, and Verastem does not undertake and specifically disclaims any obligation to update any forward-looking statements.

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