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KARUS ANNOUNCES ORGAN TRANSPLANT REJECTION COLLABORATION WITH UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL BIRMINGHAM

Innovative pharmaceutical company Karus Therapeutics has today announced a collaborative research program with the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Renal Transplant Unit under the supervision of Lead Surgeon, Andrew Ready, Consultant Surgeon, Nicholas Inston, and Stephen Shuttleworth, CSO of Karus. The research program is designed to investigate the *in vitro* mechanisms-of-action of histone deacetylase inhibitors (HDIs) in specific leukocyte subsets, allogenic responses and *in vivo* models of transplant rejection.

Over 25,000 renal transplants were performed in the US and Europe in 2008. The major barrier to transplantation between genetically non-identical patients lays in the recipient's immune system, which treats a transplanted kidney as a "non-self" and immediately or chronically, rejects it. Effective medications to suppress this immune response are, therefore, essential.

"We are delighted to have established this important collaboration" said Dr Shuttleworth, "there is a growing precedent for the use of HDIs as immunosuppressants to treat organ transplant rejection. At Karus, we have developed a unique class of HDI that displays potent anti-inflammatory activity, and we are greatly looking forward to working with the world-class team at Birmingham and exploring the potential of our compounds in this clinical setting."

Karus is a pharmaceutical company with a mission to design, develop and partner innovative, best-in-class, molecular-targeted, small-molecule drugs to treat inflammation, immune disease and cancer. The company's primary focus is the development of proprietary drugs that target epigenetic mechanisms and lipid kinase signaling. The outstanding potency and excellent tolerability of Karus's HDIs represent an innovative approach to this important drug target and brings the promise of a new gold-standard in the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis, psoriasis and cancer.

Karus comprises a seasoned commercial and scientific team, with unrivalled experience in the biotechnology and pharmaceutical sector. This expertise has enabled the company to remain focused and to make efficient progress in its development programs. The company was formed in July 2005 to develop a new family of highly potent, optimized HDAC inhibitors that were identified at the University of Southampton and Cancer Research UK.

University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (UHB) is one of the largest NHS Trusts in Britain. Created in April 1995, it has an annual revenue budget of over £300M and employs 6,000 staff whose vast expertise delivers high quality care to half a million patients a year. The regional Renal Unit at UHB is the largest provider of End Stage Renal care in the West Midlands and offers comprehensive investigational nephrology, dialysis and renal transplantation services. It is recognized for innovation in clinical care and service delivery.

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