

## **Wellspring Biosciences Founder Publishes In *Nature* On Discovery of Small Molecule Inhibitors of K-Ras**

Groundbreaking Research Offers Potential to Develop Therapies To Treat An Important Genetic Lesion in Human Cancer

La Jolla, Calif. – November 20, 2013 – Wellspring Biosciences, a leading biopharmaceutical company focused on the discovery and development of novel drugs for the treatment of cancer, announced today a publication from Kevan Shokat, Ph.D., one of its founders and chairman of its scientific advisory board, in the journal *Nature* that describes the discovery of small molecules that bind irreversibly to a common oncogenic mutant, K-Ras G12C.

Ras genes are mutated in up to 30% of human cancers and are among the most important therapeutic targets in the treatment of human cancer. Yet, to date, not a single drug that targets Ras proteins or acts on Ras-driven cancers has been developed successfully. Indeed, tumors harboring Ras mutations are among the most difficult to treat and are excluded from treatment with many therapies.

Dr. Shokat serves as Professor and Chair in the Department of Cellular and Molecular Pharmacology at UCSF as well as Investigator, Howard Hughes Medical Institute. “We are extremely excited to find a druggable binding pocket on K-Ras, the most frequently mutated oncogene in human cancer” said Professor Shokat. “Our findings can serve as the starting point for drug-discovery efforts targeting the G12C form of K-Ras and eventually other cancer causing alleles of K-Ras.”

“The proto-oncogene K-Ras is mutated in a wide array of human cancers, most of which are aggressive and respond poorly to standard therapies,” said Yi Liu, Ph.D., Chief Scientific Officer of Wellspring Biosciences. “This represents one of the most promising approaches to target K-Ras yet reported, and we look forward to continuing to advance this exciting science in the potentially transformative area of drug development.”

In February 2013, Wellspring Biosciences, through its affiliate Araxes Pharma, entered into an exclusive arrangement with Janssen Biotech, Inc. to develop first-in-class therapeutics against G12C K-Ras for the treatment of cancer. Under the agreement, Araxes Pharma will advance the program through Phase I to clinical proof-of-concept. Thereafter, Janssen has an option for the continued development and worldwide commercialization of products arising under the agreement.

The paper, titled “Inhibitors of K-Ras G12C allosterically control GTP affinity and effector interactions” was made available on November 20, 2013 in the advanced online publication of *Nature* at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1038/nature12796> .

## About Wellspring Biosciences

Wellspring Biosciences LLC is a privately held, drug discovery and development company committed to creating breakthrough medicines for the treatment of cancer and other serious diseases. Our team has a proven track record, having previously played pivotal roles in the discovery of clinical-stage compounds for the treatment of cancer and immune-mediated inflammatory diseases at Intellikine. Araxes Pharma LLC, an affiliate of Wellspring Biosciences, is engaged in an exclusive arrangement with Janssen Biotech, Inc. Wellspring Biosciences is located in La Jolla, California. For more information, please visit the company's website at [www.wellspringbiosciences.com](http://www.wellspringbiosciences.com).

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