CARGO Therapeutics Announces Appointment of Ginna Laport, MD, as Chief Medical Officer

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— Accomplished clinical leader with significant expertise in hematology/oncology drug development and a track record of advancing multiple modalities of cancer therapeutics —

SAN MATEO, Calif., Oct. 17, 2023 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- CARGO Therapeutics, Inc. (CARGO), a clinical-stage biotechnology company uniquely positioned to advance next generation, potentially curative cell therapies for cancer patients, today announced the appointment of Ginna Laport, MD, as Chief Medical Officer. Dr. Laport is a seasoned biotechnology executive and senior clinical leader. She will serve on the Company's executive team and will be responsible for providing leadership and direction to guide CARGO's clinical development strategy and execution, including the advancement of CARGO's lead candidate, CRG-022, as well as its pipeline of next-generation CAR T-cell therapies for cancer patients. CRG-022 is an autologous CD22 chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) T-cell therapy candidate, currently in a potentially pivotal Phase 2 clinical trial in patients with large B-cell lymphoma (LBCL) whose disease relapsed or was refractory (R/R) to CD19 CAR T-cell therapy.

"We are thrilled to announce the addition of Ginna to our team as Chief Medical Officer. With her extensive leadership background in clinical drug development, particularly in hematology/oncology, she brings invaluable expertise to our organization," said Gina Chapman, CARGO's President and Chief Executive Officer. "Ginna's experience in the design, development and execution of pivotal and late-stage trials will be critical as we advance CRG-022 through a potentially pivotal Phase 2 clinical study and continue to drive our earlier pipeline programs into the clinic."

"I am excited to leverage my industry and academic experience to shape the clinical programs and impact of CARGO Therapeutics," said Dr. Laport, Chief Medical Officer, CARGO Therapeutics. "This is a unique opportunity to build a world-class team that is developing potentially curative cell therapies for patients – a mission that aligns very well with my passion for improving patient care and outcomes."

Prior to joining CARGO, Dr. Laport served as Vice President of Clinical Development, Global Head of NHL/CLL Franchise, at Genentech/Roche where she was responsible for strategic development of late-stage pipeline for NHL/CLL. During her time in this role, she played a critical role in the development and acceleration of pivotal trials and directed successful BLA filings and rest of world regulatory filings for NME (new molecular entity) first-in-class CD20xCD3 bispecific antibodies Lunsumio® (mosunetuzumab) and Columvi® (glofitamab) for indolent and aggressive B-cell lymphomas. Previously, Dr. Laport was Chief Medical Officer at Tempest Therapeutics, where she directed the clinical development of small molecules that combine both tumor-targeted and immune-mediated mechanisms, including several IND submissions. Prior to Tempest, she was Vice President of Clinical Development at Corvus Pharmaceuticals, where she led the clinical development of small molecules and antibodies targeting the adenosine pathway to treat advanced solid tumors. Before Corvus, Dr. Laport was a professor of medicine in the Division of Blood and Marrow Transplantation (BMT) at Stanford University School of Medicine where her research focused on adoptive immunotherapies for malignant diseases. She also served as Director of Clinical Research in the BMT Division and as an associate director of the Stanford Cancer Institute. Prior to Stanford, Dr. Laport was an assistant professor in hematology/oncology at the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Laport served on the FDA's Oncologic Drugs Advisory Committee, was national chair of the NIH-sponsored BMT Clinical Trials Network that directs multicenter clinical trials and has co-authored over 80 publications.

Dr. Laport received her MD from the University of Texas-Houston and a BA from Baylor University. She completed her internal medicine residency and fellowship in hematology/oncology at the University of Chicago.

About CARGO Therapeutics

CARGO Therapeutics is a clinical-stage biotechnology company uniquely positioned to advance next generation, potentially curative cell therapies for cancer patients. CARGO's programs, platform technologies, and manufacturing strategy are designed to directly address the limitations of approved cell therapies, including limited durability of effect, safety concerns and unreliable supply. CARGO is currently evaluating its lead program, CRG-022, an autologous CD22 chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) T-cell therapy candidate, in a potentially pivotal Phase 2 clinical trial in patients with large B-cell lymphoma (LBCL) whose disease relapsed or was refractory (R/R) to CD19 CAR T-cell therapy. CARGO also plans to evaluate CRG-022 in patients at earlier stages of disease, including LBCL and other hematologic malignancies. Beyond its lead program, CARGO is leveraging its proprietary cell engineering platform technologies to develop a pipeline of programs that incorporate multiple transgene therapeutic "cargo" designed to enhance CAR T-cell persistence and trafficking to tumor lesions, as well as to help safeguard against tumor resistance and T-cell exhaustion. CARGO's founders are pioneers and world-class experts in CAR T-cell therapy, and CARGO's team has significant experience and success developing, manufacturing, launching and commercializing oncology and cell therapy products. For more information, please visit the CARGO Therapeutics website at https://cargo-tx.com/.

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