Agios Appoints Rahul Ballal and Cynthia Smith to Board of Directors

August 15, 2022

CAMBRIDGE, Mass., Aug. 15, 2022 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Agios Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (NASDAQ: AGIO), a leader in the field of cellular metabolism pioneering therapies for genetically defined diseases, today announced the appointments of Rahul Ballal, Ph.D., chief executive officer of Imara, and Cynthia Smith, former chief commercial officer of ZS Pharma, to its board of directors.

“Agios is committed to assembling a top-notch, diverse board dedicated to realizing the company’s long-term success and creating value for patients, shareholders, our team and all our stakeholders,” said Brian Goff, chief executive officer of Agios. “Rahul and Cynthia are seasoned biopharmaceutical executives with critical expertise to help us maximize Agios’ potential. Cynthia’s track record of success in commercial and corporate strategy will serve us well through our current and future product launches, and Rahul’s vast operational and business development experience as well as important insights into the opportunities and challenges of creating medicines in our therapeutic focus areas will provide immediate benefits as we continue to advance our mission to make an impact for people with rare and genetically defined diseases.”

Dr. Ballal is a biopharmaceutical executive with more than 15 years of experience in business development, strategic transactions and company financing, as well as significant therapeutic area expertise in hemolytic anemias. He has served as Imara’s president and chief executive officer and a member of the board of directors since June 2018. Dr. Ballal joined Imara from Northern Biologics, where he served as chief business officer, and Versant Ventures, where he served as an entrepreneur-in-residence. Previously, Dr. Ballal was vice president of business development at Flexion Therapeutics. Prior to Flexion, he held business development and leadership positions at Novartis Venture Fund, Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard and Redmind Inc. He holds a Ph.D. in biochemistry from Georgetown University, an M.S. in bioinformatics from Johns Hopkins University and a B.S. in biology from Brown University.

Ms. Smith is a biopharmaceutical executive with 25 years of experience leading companies through complex transformations, including the transition from clinical development to commercialization and successfully launching products in a number of therapeutic areas. Most recently, she served as chief commercial officer of ZS Pharma. Previously, Ms. Smith was vice president of market access and commercial development at Affymax, where she played a key role in launching the company’s initial renal medication. Prior to joining Affymax, she held several leadership positions at Merck in market access, corporate and commercial strategy, public policy and external affairs. Before working in the biopharmaceutical industry, Ms. Smith served as a healthcare policy analyst in the White House Office of Management and Budget. Ms. Smith currently serves on the boards of Protara Therapeutics, Spero Therapeutics and Akebia Therapeutics. She holds an M.B.A. from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, an M.S. in public policy from the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University and a B.A. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

About Agios
Agios is a biopharmaceutical company that is fueled by connections. The Agios team cultivates strong bonds with patient communities, healthcare professionals, partners and colleagues to discover, develop and deliver therapies for genetically defined diseases. In the U.S., Agios markets a first-in-class pyruvate kinase (PK) activator for adults with PK deficiency, the first disease-modifying therapy for this rare, lifelong, debilitating hemolytic anemia. Building on the company's leadership in the field of cellular metabolism, Agios is advancing a robust clinical pipeline of investigational medicines with active and planned programs in alpha- and beta-thalassemia, sickle cell disease, pediatric PK deficiency and MDS-associated anemia. In addition to its clinical pipeline, Agios has multiple investigational therapies in preclinical development and an industry-leading research team with unmatched expertise in cellular metabolism and genetics. For more information, please visit the company’s website at www.agios.com.

Cautionary Note Regarding Forward-Looking Statements
This press release contains forward-looking statements within the meaning of The Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Such forward-looking statements include those regarding the expected benefits of Dr. Ballal’s and Ms. Smith’s service on the board of directors of Agios and the expected benefits of the company’s preclinical, clincial and commercial development plans. The words "expects," "anticipates," "believes," "intends," "estimates," "plans," "will," "outlook" and similar expressions are intended to identify forward-looking statements, although not all forward-looking statements contain these identifying words. Such statements are subject to numerous important factors, risks and uncertainties that may cause actual events or results to differ materially from Agios’ current expectations and beliefs. Management’s expectations and, therefore, any forward-looking statements in this press release could also be affected by risks and uncertainties relating to a number of other important factors, including, without limitation risks and uncertainties related to: the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Agios’ business, operations, strategy, goals and anticipated milestones, including its ongoing and planned research activities, ability to conduct ongoing and planned clinical trials, clinical supply of current or future drug candidates, commercial supply of future approved products, and launching, marketing and selling of current or future approved products; Agios’ results of clinical trials and preclinical studies, including subsequent analysis of existing data and new data received from ongoing and future studies; the content and timing of decisions made by the U.S. FDA, the EMA or other regulatory authorities, including with respect to the regulatory submissions for PYRUKYND® (mitapivat), investigational review boards at clinical trial sites and publication review bodies; Agios’ ability to obtain and maintain requisite regulatory approvals and to enroll patients in its planned clinical trials; unplanned cash requirements and expenditures and competitive factors; Agios’ ability to obtain, maintain and enforce patent and other intellectual property protection for any product candidates it is developing; Agios’ ability to establish and maintain collaborations; the failure of Agios to receive milestone or royalty payments related to the sale of its oncology business, the uncertainty of the timing of any receipt of any such payments, and the uncertainty of the results and effectiveness of the use of proceeds from the transaction with Servier; and general economic and market conditions. These and other risks are described in greater detail under the caption “Risk Factors” included in Agios’ public filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission, or SEC, including the risks and uncertainties set forth under the heading Risk Factors in our filings with the SEC. While the list of factors presented here is considered representative, this list should not be considered to be a complete statement of all potential risks and uncertainties. Any forward-looking statements contained in this press release are made only as of the date hereof, and we undertake no obligation to update forward-looking statements to reflect developments or information obtained after the date hereof and disclaim any obligation to do so other than as may be required by law.

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Photos accompanying this announcement are available at:

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Source: Agios Pharmaceuticals, Inc.

Rahul Ballal, Ph.D.



Rahul Ballal, Ph.D., chief executive officer of Imara, joins Agios' board of directors.

Cynthia Smith



Cynthia Smith, former chief commercial officer of ZS Pharma, joins Agios' board of directors.