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Singapore: Protein Sciences Corporation, US-based manufacturer of Flublok influenza vaccine, and UMN Pharma Inc, based out of Japan, have announced that UMN has been signed on as the latest partner of the international Zika vaccine consortium initiated by Protein Sciences.

The consortium, which also includes partners Sinergium Biotech (Buenos Aires, Argentina) and Mundo Sano, a private foundation with activities in Argentina, Spain and Africa, is developing a vaccine to combat the Zika virus based on Protein Sciences' proprietary technology.

The partners are pooling resources to drive advancement of their vaccine candidate into the clinic as quickly as possible, which is anticipated for later this year. Under the terms of the agreement, UMN will pay an upfront fee to fund the development and manufacture of the vaccine being produced at Protein Sciences. In return, UMN will receive manufacturing and commercial rights to the vaccine in Japan and other counties to be determined.

Dan Adams, Protein Sciences Executive Chairman and Global Head of Business Development said, "Our consortium is gaining traction because people realize that only by using a proven platform technology such as ours will it be possible to get a Zika vaccine approved by authorities and distributed to where it is needed quickly." He added, "We are making a Zika vaccine using the same platform technology that we use to make Flublok, which has been proven to be safe and effective in tens of thousands of healthy adults."

UMN is no stranger to Protein Sciences' technology. The Company holds a license for Flublok in Japan, China, Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore. Unigen, a joint venture of UMN and IHI Corporation, will manufacture Flublok and Astellas will market it in Japan.

Tatsuyoshi Hirano, Chairman and CEO at UMN Pharma said, "We are pleased to join the Zika vaccine consortium. As a world class biopharmaceutical and vaccine supplier, we would like to contribute the use of our 21,000L bioreactors to provide Zika vaccine to emerging countries in addition to providing influenza vaccine to the Japan and US markets."