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Syros to replicate Japanese clinical trials of cancer drug in US and Europe

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Tokyo: Cambridge-based Syros Pharmaceuticals has entered into an exclusive license agreement with the Japanese oncology company TMRC Co. Ltd., to develop and commercialize tamibarotene in North America and Europe for cancer. Financial terms of the agreement were not disclosed.

Tamibarotene is a first-in-class selective agonist to retinoic acid receptor alpha (RARÎ±), a nuclear hormone receptor which regulates transcription. Using Syros' proprietary gene control discovery and development platform, the company discovered a cancer dependency to RARÎ± and a biomarker to identify patients with this dependency who may respond to RARÎ± agonist therapy.

Syros plans to initiate a phase II clinical trial in AML and MDS patients in early 2016 with tamibarotene. The objective of the single-arm, single-agent study will be to determine the efficacy of tamibarotene in patients with high levels of the RARÎ± biomarker. The dose and schedule to be used in the trial will be the same as those used in the approved APL indication in Japan.

"Tamibarotene represents a promising therapeutic option for a genomically-defined subset of cancer patients, and we are moving rapidly to bring this therapy to patients. Tamibarotene represents a promising therapeutic option for a genomically-defined subset of cancer patients, and we are moving rapidly to bring this therapy to patients," said Nancy Simonian, MD, Chief Executive Officer of Syros.

"Using our proprietary gene control target discovery and development platform, we discovered a novel cancer dependency to RARÎ±, and we were delighted then to identify tamibarotene, a first- and best-in-class selective RARÎ± agonist with a well characterized efficacy and safety profile. By in-licensing this drug, we are able to accelerate Syros to a clinical-stage organization and in so doing demonstrate the power of our platform to identify gene-control targets and biomarkers, while we continue to advance our own internally discovered drug candidates to gene control targets."