Surrozen Publishes Study in 'Respiratory Research' Demonstrating the Promise of a Wnt Mimetic Antibody in Treating Pulmonary Fibrosis

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In a preclinical model of pulmonary fibrosis, a Surrozen antibody-based SWAP platform molecule decreased pulmonary inflammation and fibrosis and improved lung function

Surrozen Wnt mimetic SWAP molecules also expanded alveolar organoid cultures and impacted multiple lung cell types in vivo

Results highlight the potential of Wnt mimetic agonists to repair tissue after damage in severe lung diseases like idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO, Calif., April 03, 2024 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Surrozen, Inc. (Nasdaq: SRZN), a company pioneering targeted therapeutics that selectively modulate the Wnt pathway for tissue repair and regeneration, announced today publication of data in *Respiratory Research* highlighting the potential for Surrozen's Wnt mimetic technologies to treat serious lung diseases like idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF) https://respiratory-research.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12931-024-02786-2. The results observed with systemic administration of Surrozen's Wnt mimetic antibody in an acute bleomycin model of pulmonary fibrosis demonstrate a Wnt pathway mediated decrease in inflammation and fibrosis and improvement in lung function.

Idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF) is an interstitial lung disease characterized by areas of myofibroblast accumulation and extracellular matrix (ECM) deposition, disruption of alveolar architecture, and restricted lung physiology. In pulmonary fibrosis, multiple cell types may need to be targeted to provide a regenerative environment facilitating repair. Mechanisms that stimulate expansion of certain beneficial cell types in the lung which also limiting expansion of fibrosis promoting cell types and of pro-inflammatory cells may be desirable.

The canonical Wnt/β-catenin signaling pathway plays an important role in the lung alveolar epithelium. During development this pathway is critical for the establishment of alveoli. In adult lungs, a subset of alveolar type 2 (AT2) cells are stem cells, and Wnt/β-catenin signaling is required for AT2 cell maintenance and renewal under both normal and injured conditions. Furthermore, activation of Wnt signaling has been found to have an anti-inflammatory effect on macrophages in several mouse lung damage models.

"Current treatments for severe lung diseases like IPF aren't able to regenerate normal, functional tissue," said Yang Li, Ph.D., Executive Vice President, Research at Surrozen. "This work published in *Respiratory Research* represents a breakthrough in understanding the role of the Wnt pathway in lung fibrosis and the potential for Wnt mimetics to reduce fibrosis and improve lung function."

About SZN-043 for Severe Alcohol-Associated Hepatitis
SZN-043 is the first development candidate using Surrozen's SWEETS™ technology. Surrozen is developing SZN-043 for severe liver diseases, initially focusing on alcohol-associated hepatitis. The Company has completed a Phase 1a clinical trial in patients with chronic liver disease and healthy volunteers. SZN-043 demonstrated acceptable safety and tolerability in all subjects, with evidence of target engagement, Wnt signal activation and effects on liver function. The Company is initiating the Phase 1b clinical trial in patients with severe alcohol-associated hepatitis and expects that proof-of-concept data from this trial may be available in the first half of 2025.

About SZN-413 for Retinal Diseases
SZN-413 is a bi-specific antibody targeting Fzd4-mediated Wnt signaling designed using Surrozen's SWAP™ technology. It is currently being developed for the treatment of retinal vascular-associated diseases. Data generated by Surrozen with SZN-413 in preclinical models of retinopathy demonstrated that SZN-413 could potently stimulate Wnt signaling in the eye, induce normal retinal vessel regrowth, suppress pathological vessel growth and reduce vascular leakage. This novel approach could thus potentially allow for regeneration of healthy eye tissue, not only halting retinopathy, but possibly allowing for a full reversal of the patient's disease.

In the fourth quarter of 2022, Surrozen entered into a strategic partnership with Boehringer Ingelheim for the research and development of SZN-413 for the treatment of retinal diseases. Under the terms of the agreement, Boehringer Ingelheim received an exclusive, worldwide license to develop SZN-413 and other Fzd4-specific Wnt-modulating molecules for all purposes, including as a treatment for retinal diseases, in exchange for an upfront payment to Surrozen of $12.5 million. Surrozen will also be eligible to receive up to $587.0 million in success-based development, regulatory, and commercial milestone payments, in addition to mid-single digit to low-double digit royalties on sales. After an initial period of joint research, Boehringer Ingelheim will assume all development and commercial responsibilities.

About Wnt Signaling
Wnt signaling plays key roles in the control of development, homeostasis, and regeneration of many essential organs and tissues, including liver, intestine, lung, kidney, retina, central nervous system, cochlea, bone, and others. Modulation of Wnt signaling pathways has potential for treatment of degenerative diseases and tissue injuries. Surrozen's platform and proprietary technologies have the potential to overcome the limitations in pursuing the Wnt pathway as a therapeutic strategy.

About Surrozen
Surrozen is a clinical stage biotechnology company discovering and developing drug candidates to selectively modulate the Wnt pathway. Surrozen is developing tissue-specific antibodies designed to engage the body's existing biological repair mechanisms with a current focus on severe liver and eye diseases. For more information, please visit www.surrozen.com.

Forward Looking Statements

This press release contains certain forward-looking statements within the meaning of the federal securities laws. Forward-looking statements generally are accompanied by words such as "will," "plan," "intend," "potential," "expect," "could," or the negative of these words and similar expressions that predict or indicate future events or trends or that are not statements of historical matters. These forward-looking statements include, but are not limited to, statements regarding Surrozen's discovery, research and development activities, in particular its development plans for its product candidates SZN-043 and SZN-413 (including anticipated clinical development plans and timelines, and the availability of data, the potential for such product candidates to be used to treat human disease, as well as the potential benefits of such product candidates), and the Company's partnership with Boehringer Ingelheim, including the potential for future success-based development, regulatory, and commercial milestone payments, in addition to mid-single digit to low-double digit royalties on sales. These statements are based on various assumptions, whether or not identified in this press release, and on the current expectations of the management of Surrozen and are not predictions of actual performance. These forward-looking statements are provided for illustrative purposes only and are not intended to serve as, and must not be relied on as a guarantee, an assurance, a prediction, or a definitive statement of fact or probability. Actual events and circumstances are difficult or impossible to predict and will differ from assumptions. Many actual events and circumstances are beyond the control of Surrozen. These forward-looking statements are subject to a number of risks and uncertainties, including the initiation, cost, timing, progress and results of research and development activities, preclinical or and clinical trials with respect to SZN-043, SZN-413 and potential future drug candidates; the Company's ability to fund its preclinical and clinical trials and development efforts, whether with existing funds or through additional fundraising; Surrozen's ability to identify, develop and commercialize drug candidates; Surrozen's ability to successfully complete preclinical and clinical studies for SZN-043, SZN-413, or other future product candidates; the effects that arise from volatility in global economic, political, regulatory and market conditions; and all other factors discussed in Surrozen's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2022 and Surrozen's Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended September 30, 2023 under the heading "Risk Factors," and other documents Surrozen has filed, or will file, with the Securities and Exchange Commission. If any of these risks materialize or our assumptions prove incorrect, actual results could differ materially from the results implied by these forward-looking statements. There may be additional risks that Surrozen presently does not know, or that Surrozen currently believes are immaterial, that could also cause actual results to differ from those contained in the forward-looking statements. In addition, forward-looking statements reflect Surrozen's expectations, plans, or forecasts of future events and views as of the date of this press release. Surrozen anticipates that subsequent events and developments will cause its assessments to change. However, while Surrozen may elect to update these forward-looking statements at some point in the future, Surrozen specifically disclaims any obligation to do so, except as required by law. These forward-looking statements should not be relied upon as representing Surrozen's assessments of any date after the date of this press release. Accordingly, undue reliance should not be placed upon the forward-looking statements.

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