Connecticut Innovations Announces Members of the Bioscience Innovation Advisory Committee

Committee will oversee administration of the $200 million fund

Rocky Hill, Conn. (PRWEB) December 23, 2013 -- Connecticut Innovations (CI), the state’s quasi-public authority responsible for helping businesses grow through innovative financing and strategic assistance, today announced the names of the appointees to the 13-member Bioscience Innovation Advisory Committee, which will steer the direction of the $200 million Connecticut Bioscience Innovation Fund (CBIF) and approve expenditures. CI executive vice president and chief innovation officer Jeremy Crisp, Ph.D., a former Novartis Institutes for BioMedical Research executive, was hired earlier this year to lead the CBIF. The committee held its first official meeting on December 5.

In July, Governor Dannel P. Malloy signed Public Act 13-239 into law to create the CBIF, establish an Advisory Committee to oversee the fund's operations and require CI to administer the fund under the committee's supervision. Under the statute, the governor appointed four members to the committee while the president pro tempore of the state senate, speaker of the house, and majority and minority leader of both chambers appointed one member each. The commissioners of the state’s Department of Economic and Community Development and Department of Public Health or their designees serve as ex-officio voting members, and CI’s chief executive officer and executive director will serve as committee chairperson. Appointed members were selected based on their skill, knowledge and experience in relevant businesses and sciences related to health care delivery, medical devices, life sciences, insurance or information technology.

"We are delighted to have attracted such high caliber individuals to the advisory committee," said Claire Leonardi, CEO of Connecticut Innovations. "Their collective depth and breadth of experience across the bioscience spectrum will ensure great stewardship of the fund."

The new board members are Peter Farina, Ph.D., executive in residence, Canaan Partners; Steven Hanks, M.D., vice president of medical affairs for Hartford HealthCare - Central Region; Joseph Kaliko, J.D., chief executive officer of Gaming Innovations International; Marc Lalande, Ph.D., Health Net Professor and chair of the Department of Genetics and Developmental Biology, and executive director of Genomics and Personalized Medicine Programs, UConn; William LaRochelle, Ph.D., head of healthcare and key opinion leader management, Roche 454 Sequencing Solutions International; Charles Lee, Ph.D., scientific director, The Jackson Laboratory for Genomic Medicine; Jewel Mullen, M.D., commissioner, Connecticut Department of Public Health (ex-officio); Claire Leonardi, chief executive officer of Connecticut Innovations (chair); Alan Mendelson, general partner, Axiom Venture Partners; Edmund Pezalla, M.D., M.P.H., national medical director for pharmaceutical policy, Aetna; Carolyn Slayman, Ph.D., Sterling Professor of Genetics, professor of cellular and molecular physiology and deputy dean, Yale School of Medicine; Catherine Smith, commissioner, Department of Economic and Community Development (ex-officio); and Eleanor Tandler, founder and chief executive officer, Novattract Surgical.

About Peter Farina, Ph.D.
Peter Farina, Ph.D., of North Salem, New York, is an executive in residence at Canaan Partners, a venture capital firm located in Westport, Conn., where he assesses and advises on pharma/biotech/healthcare investments. He is also the managing partner of a consulting firm, Salient Science & Technology LLC, which advises several U.S. and Chinese biotech firms on strategic and technical matters in pharmaceutical research.
and development. Farina serves as co-chair of Connecticut United for Research Excellence (CURE) board and a member of the advisory board of the University of Connecticut School of Pharmacy, the NIH Blueprint Neurotherapeutics Network (BPN) steering committee, and the Emory University DRIVE Advisory Board. Additionally, he was a founder and chief executive officer of Developing World Cures, a nonprofit company working on neglected diseases.

About Steven Hanks, M.D.
Steven D. Hanks, M.D., M.M.M., F.A.C.P., F.F.S.M.B., of Farmington, Connecticut, is vice president of medical affairs for Hartford HealthCare’s central region. He is the former executive vice president and chief medical officer for The Hospital of Central Connecticut (THOCC). Hanks has been and will continue to serve as THOCC’s chief academic officer and remains the assistant dean for graduate medical education at the University of Connecticut. An internist and emergency physician, Hanks joined THOCC in 2004 from the Finger Lakes Regional Health System, where he served as senior vice president of medical affairs and chief medical officer. Prior to that he was chief medical officer of Adroit Research Solutions, a doctor's research organization that he co-founded, as well as chief medical officer of the Rochester Community Individual Practice Association, at the time one of the largest IPAs in the nation.

About Joseph J. Kaliko
Joseph J. Kaliko of Greenwich, Connecticut, serves as president and chief executive officer of Gaming Innovations International LLC, which designs innovative gaming products and services for lotteries and their suppliers internationally. He is a member of the Connecticut and Ohio bars and is registered to practice as a patent attorney before the United States Patent and Trademark Office. As an inventor, Kaliko has been awarded patents that have been used to launch businesses in the U.S. and abroad.

About Marc Lalande, Ph.D.
Marc Lalande, Ph.D., of West Hartford, Connecticut, is Health Net Professor and chair of the Department of Genetics and Developmental Biology and executive director of Genomics and Personalized Medicine Programs at the University of Connecticut. He received a Ph.D. in medical biophysics from the University of Toronto in 1981. His postdoctoral training was with Samuel A. Latt, M.D. Ph.D., in the Department of Pediatrics, Harvard Medical School and Children's Hospital, Boston, Mass. From 1985 to 1988, he was assistant professor, Department of Pathology and Center for Human Genetics, McGill University, in Montreal, Quebec, before returning to Boston Children’s Hospital. He remained at Harvard Medical School until 1998, where he was an associate professor of pediatrics and an assistant investigator of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute.

About William J. LaRochelle, Ph.D.
William LaRochelle, Ph.D., of Madison, Connecticut, is currently a member of the Roche 454 Sequencing Solutions International Business Team and head of key opinion leader management. In addition, he is the Roche 454 global liaison to Genentech, Roche Pharma, Chugai

Pharmaceutical Co. and external key opinion leaders for Roche’s personalized healthcare strategy in cancer genomic medicine. He has over 25 years of translational research and drug development experience beginning with 13 years at the National Cancer Institute, Bethesda, Md., and almost 13 years at CuraGen/454 Corporation, Branford, Conn.

About Charles Lee, Ph.D.
Charles Lee, Ph.D., of Farmington, Connecticut, is the scientific director of The Jackson Laboratory for Genomic Medicine. Prior to joining the laboratory, Lee was director of the Molecular Genetic Research Unit at
Brigham and Women’s Hospital, an associate professor at Harvard Medical School, and a board-certified clinical cytogenticist. He received his doctoral degree from the University of Alberta, Canada; completed a research fellowship at Cambridge University, England; and conducted his clinical training at Harvard Medical School.

About Commissioner Jewel Mullen, M.D.
Jewel Mullen, M.D., of Middlefield, Connecticut, oversees the state’s leading public health agency as commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Public Health. Appointed to this position by Governor Dannel Malloy in December 2010, Dr. Mullen has combined clinical work, research, teaching and administration throughout a career focused on improving the health of all people, especially the underserved.

About Claire Leonardi
Claire Leonardi of Avon, Connecticut, is chief executive officer of Connecticut Innovations, where she manages the organization’s full array of business startup and growth initiatives, which include diverse lending programs, venture and equity investment funds, and programs to support innovation, entrepreneurship, collaboration and commercialization. Claire is a veteran investment and venture capital executive with more than 30 years of experience in the financial services industry. Leonardi will serve as committee chairperson.

About Alan Mendelson
Alan Mendelson of West Hartford, Connecticut, is the founder and a general partner of Axiom Venture Partners. Prior to founding Axiom Venture Partners, Mendelson had a 24-year career in investments at Aetna Life & Casualty in Hartford, Conn., where he was involved in more than $3 billion of private placement debt financings with estimated combined losses of under $10 million. During his final six years with Aetna, he focused its venture investing on the medical/healthcare area, where he made a number of successful investments, including investments in GMIS, Geron, Human Genome Sciences and SyStemix. In several of these companies, he was a founding investor, and in the case of SyStemix, also its de facto chief executive officer. Overall, the $65 million portfolio of direct investments generated approximately $265 million of proceeds.

About Edmund Pezalla, M.D.
Edmund Pezalla, M.D., M.P.H., of Wethersfield, Connecticut, is Aetna’s national medical director for pharmaceutical policy and strategy. He is responsible for the integration of pharmacy policy and activities into Aetna’s overall strategy and operations. He also serves as the lead clinical spokesperson for Aetna in pharmacy-related issues and represents Aetna on industry work groups and conferences. He is Aetna’s leading executive on pharmaceutical development, reimbursement strategy and drug evaluation. He is active on projects with the IOM, CDC and FDA as well as MIT’s Center for Biomedical Innovation. Recently, Pezalla served as a consultant for the President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology for their report “Propelling Innovation in Drug Discovery, Development and Evaluation.”

About Carolyn Slayman, Ph.D.
Carolyn Slayman, Ph.D., of Hamden, Connecticut, is the deputy dean of Yale School of Medicine (YSM), where she is also Sterling Professor of Genetics and a professor of cellular and molecular physiology and heads a laboratory focusing on the biogenesis and molecular mechanisms of membrane transport proteins. She chaired the medical school’s Department of Genetics for 11 years, and since then has served as deputy dean for academic and scientific affairs. In the latter role, she has broad oversight of YSM research, working with the heads of the school’s 29 departments and five interdepartmental centers to recruit faculty, launch new areas of investigation, and stimulate partnerships and collaborations. She also participates on behalf of YSM in the
development of Yale’s new West Campus (purchased from the Bayer Pharmaceutical Company in 2007), where work is underway to form interdisciplinary institutes in areas including biodesign, cancer biology, chemical biology, microbial diversity, and systems biology.

About Commissioner Catherine Smith
Catherine Smith of Northford, Connecticut, is commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), the lead state agency responsible for attracting and retaining businesses and jobs, revitalizing neighborhoods and communities, expanding affordable housing opportunities and fostering appropriate development in Connecticut’s towns and cities. Governor Dannel P. Malloy appointed her to the position in April 2011. Prior to joining DECD, Commissioner Smith had a distinguished career in the insurance and financial services industry, beginning with Aetna in 1983.

About Eleanor L. Tandler
Eleanor L. Tandler of Guilford, Connecticut, is the founder and chief executive officer of NovaTract Surgical Inc. Prior to NovaTract, Tandler was the director of venture development at the University of Connecticut Research and Development Corporation (UConn R&D), where she worked to create new business startups based on innovative technologies developed by the faculty and staff at the university. During her tenure at UConn R&D, she served as interim chief executive officer of New Ortho Polymers, a UConn startup focused on the development of new orthodontic appliances based on utilizing high-performance polymers. Prior to that, she spent five years as a venture capital investor with Radius Ventures, an early-stage venture capital firm focused on health and life sciences with approximately $230 million under management.

About Connecticut Innovations Inc.
Connecticut Innovations (CI) is the leading source of financing and ongoing support for Connecticut's innovative, growing companies. To maximize the growth potential of each business, CI tailors its solutions and often combines its funds with resources from other financial leaders to provide venture capital and strategic support for early-stage technology companies; flexible loans for established companies with new innovations; grants that support innovation and collaboration; and connections to its well-established network of partners and professionals. Through all these initiatives, CI has helped bring $4 billion in financing to Connecticut companies. The state’s most active early-stage investor, CI has created more than 26,000 jobs. For more information on CI, please visit www.ctinnovations.com.
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