

University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute Selects Local Company to Monitor

NEW RELEASE

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University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute Selects Local Company to Monitor Clinical Trials of Drugs That Help the Immune System Fight Disease

Pittsburgh, March 8 - The University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute (UPCI) has selected local biotechnology company, ImmunoSite, as its exclusive partner for monitoring patients on clinical trials of a special class of drugs known as immunopotentiators - drugs specifically designed to attack cancer cells by modifying the patient's immune system. ImmunoSite will monitor immune system function in patients enrolled in clinical trials of these new and promising drugs at UPCI, accelerating the drug development process and making new agents more readily available to patients.

"ImmunoSite provides UPCI with a tremendous opportunity to quickly and cost effectively understand the influence of vaccines, small molecules or other promising drugs in modulating the patient's immune system to combat cancer or other diseases," said Ronald B. Herberman, M.D., director of UPCI. "This service has the potential to save the pharmaceutical industry millions of dollars in clinical trial costs that result from insufficient understanding of these interactions, and to more quickly develop potentially life-saving treatments for disease."

ImmunoSite's services will allow UPCI to accelerate the drug development process by providing critical data on the efficacy of immunopotentiating drugs, not only in oncology, but also in areas such as inflammation, autoimmunity, infectious diseases, immunotoxicology and organ transplant rejection. The information derived from monitoring will provide key insights into the drugs' mechanisms of action, dosing regimens and biological activities, yielding data to support decision-making throughout all phases of clinical trials.

"We are delighted that UPCI has agreed to join with ImmunoSite as its unique partner in immunomonitoring," said Raymond Vennare, president and CEO of ImmunoSite. "This strategic collaboration strongly reinforces ImmunoSite's position as a world leader in this field and will allow us to provide significant expertise in coordinating clinical trials and monitoring a patient's response to drugs that have the best potential to interact with the immune system to prevent disease."

ImmunoSite, founded by Theresa Whiteside, Ph.D., and Elaine Elder, Ph.D., researchers in the immunologic monitoring laboratory at UPCI, is dedicated to providing comprehensive immunologic monitoring services in support of the discovery and development of vaccines, immunotherapies and other conventional pharmaceuticals. The information generated at ImmunoSite adds value and cuts the cost of drug development by efficiently evaluating the biological effects of drug candidates on the clinical development pathway.

UPCI is the only National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer center in western Pennsylvania, and a recognized leader in providing comprehensive cancer prevention, detection, diagnosis and treatment; bio-medical research; compassionate patient care and support; and community-based outreach services. UPCI investigators are world-renowned for their work in basic, clinical and translational research.

For more information on ImmunoSite, please contact Andrew Remes, Ph.D., at (412) 623-4103, or Raymond F. Vennare at (412) 826-5566.

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