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NeutroFlow: Leading European Medical Consortium Awarded €2.5 Million Grant from EIC Transition Programme to Advance Predictive Biomarker Development for Immunotherapy Response

Heidelberg, Germany, Milan, Seville, Spain and Binyamina, Israel (ots/PRNewswire) -

A European-led consortium comprising Heidelberg University Hospital (UKHD), the European Institute of Oncology (IEO), Virgen Macarena University Hospital, and OncoHost today announced that it has been awarded a €2.5 million grant under the EIC Transition Programme of Horizon Europe.

The funding will drive the consortium's collaborative efforts to develop *NeutroFlow*—a novel, point-of-care diagnostic test designed to predict patient response to immune checkpoint inhibitors (ICIs) across five cancer indications: non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC), renal cell carcinoma (RCC), melanoma, head and neck squamous cell carcinoma (HNSCC), and triple-negative breast cancer (TNBC). OncoHost will lead and coordinate the consortium, with project activities officially launching in May 2025.

The principal investigators representing each consortium partner are: **Prof. Petros Christopoulos, Dr. Stefanie Zschäbitz and Dr. Sebastian Dieter** from Heidelberg University, **Prof. Francesco Bertolini and Dr. Patrizia Mancuso** from the European Institute of Oncology (IEO), **Dr. Luis de la Cruz, Dr. David Vicente-Baz, and Dr. Alberto Moreno** from Virgen Macarena University Hospital, and **Dr. Michal Harel** from OncoHost. These distinguished leaders bring unparalleled expertise across translational research, immunotherapy, clinical oncology, and precision medicine, ensuring a robust foundation for the success of the NeutroFlow project.

Despite the transformative impact of ICIs, only a fraction of patients achieve durable benefit, underscoring the critical need for reliable, actionable predictive biomarkers. Building on recent scientific breakthroughs—including the identification of a unique subset of Ly6Ehi neutrophils as a robust pre-treatment biomarker published in *Cancer Cell* (PMID 38181798) — the NeutroFlow project will leverage these insights to deliver a rapid, flow cytometry-based test deployable across standard hospital settings.

By providing a cost-effective and scalable solution, NeutroFlow is positioned to significantly enhance clinical decision-making, optimize immunotherapy outcomes, and help address one of oncology's most pressing challenges: identifying which patients are most likely to benefit from ICI treatment.

This grant underscores the consortium's collective commitment to transforming precision oncology by accelerating access to predictive, patient-centric solutions.

About the Consortium Partners:

Heidelberg University is one of Europe's leading research institutions, renowned for excellence in life sciences, translational medicine, and oncology innovation.

European Institute of Oncology (IEO), based in Milan, Italy, is internationally recognized for its research, treatment, and education initiatives focused on advancing the fight against cancer, and is one of the leading centers involved in the identification by flow cytometry of rare cell populations with predictive/prognostic potential for the therapy of cancer patients.

Virgen Macarena University Hospital in Seville, Spain, is a premier center for clinical research and patient care, with a longstanding commitment to oncology excellence and translational science. Its extensive experience in immunotherapy and biomarker-driven trials enables rapid clinical validation and integration of novel precision tools.

OncoHost is a precision medicine company headquartered in Binyamina, Israel and Cary, NC, pioneering proteomic-based predictive technologies. Its proprietary platform, PROphet®, informs immunotherapy decision-making through plasma proteomic pattern analysis, improving patient outcomes worldwide.

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