



Novel Malaria Drug Discovery Presented at the ASTMH Tropical Medicine Meeting by Ocean Biomedical's Scientific Co-founder, Dr. Jake Kurtis, unveiling the potential for a new class of Antimalarial Drugs.

November 1, 2022

• Ocean Biomedical will be a wholly owned subsidiary of Aesther Healthcare Acquisition Corp. and will change its name to Ocean Biomedical, Inc., expected to be listed on NASDAQ under the symbol, "OCEA".

Providence, RI and New York, NY, Nov. 01, 2022 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Ocean Biomedical and Aesther Healthcare Acquisition Corp. (NASDAQ: AEHA) announced today that Scientific Co-founder, Dr. Jake Kurtis, will present groundbreaking research discoveries at this week's Annual Meeting of The American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene. **These discoveries have the potential to launch a whole new class of antimalarial drugs, and come at time when current artemisinin-based treatments are beginning to [lose efficacy](#).**

Dr. Kurtis' team at Brown University has developed a family of small molecule drugs which bind to the [parasite protein PfGARP](#) at nanomolar concentrations and kill parasites by inducing apoptosis. They have demonstrated these drugs: 1) are highly specific for PfGARP binding, 2) are non-toxic in multiple *in vitro* and *in vivo* systems, 3) have excellent pharmacokinetic properties, and 4) rapidly clear parasitemia in animal models.

In prior studies [published](#) and [reviewed](#) in *Nature*, Ocean Biomedical's Scientific Co-founder, Dr. Jake Kurtis, identified [PfGARP](#) as a target of human antibodies which kill up to 100% of parasites *in vitro* by inducing apoptosis or parasite programmed cell death – this discovery forms the basis of Ocean Biomedical's lipid encapsulated mRNA-based vaccine and therapeutic monoclonal antibodies.

Ocean's breakthrough approach targets the blood-stage portion of the malaria lifecycle – **the stage responsible for all clinical disease and death**, and therefore has the potential of significantly greater efficacy compared with vaccines targeting other stages. Along with the related vaccine program, this small molecule drug program will be a key focus of Ocean Biomedical's development pipeline in 2023.

Malaria caused by infection with *Plasmodium* parasites is the greatest single-agent killer of children on the planet, killing approximately 627,000 individuals last year. Artemisinin-based drug therapy remains the mainstay of treatment, but the spread of parasites resistant to this family of compounds threatens recent progress achieved by antimalarial campaigns and underscores the urgent need to identify new anti-malarial drugs. Surprisingly, WHO malaria treatment protocols do not reserve novel classes of antimalarials specifically for the treatment of severe malaria- a central tenet of antimicrobial stewardship- due to the paucity of available alternative drug classes.

"Small molecule drugs targeting PfGARP have an impressive ability to induce parasite cell death and represent a novel class of anti-malarials, which we so desperately need as artemisinin resistant parasites spread," commented Dr. Jake Kurtis, Chair of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at the Warren Alpert Medical School Brown University; Scientific co-founder.

"Falciparum malaria is a leading cause of death in children world-wide and our global malaria treatment strategy relies almost exclusively on artemisinin-based drugs. The recent emergence of high grade resistance to artemisinin is an existential threat to this strategy and mandates the development of novel classes of antimalarials. We are thrilled to announce our discovery of a novel class of antimalarials which have the potential to save hundreds of thousands of lives" said Dr. Chirinjeev Kathuria, co-founder and Executive Chairman.

Suren Ajarapu, Chairman and CEO of Aesther, commented, "Aesther is honored to be part of the exciting discovery announced by Ocean Biomedical today. We look forward to working with Ocean to bring these therapies to patients. This discovery, coupled with the powerful approach in our malaria vaccine program, will lead to long term shareholder value growth and appreciation."

About Aesther Healthcare Acquisition Corp.

Aesther is a special purpose acquisition company (SPAC) formed for the purpose of effecting a merger, capital stock exchange, asset acquisition, stock purchase, reorganization or similar business combination with one or more businesses. Its principals possess public and private market investing experience and operational knowledge to bring value added benefits to Ocean Biomedical. The Aesther team has substantial experience investing in and operating businesses in multiple sectors, as well as a significant long-term track record in creatively structuring transactions to unlock and maximize value.

To learn more, visit www.aestherhealthcarespac.com.

About Ocean Biomedical

Ocean Biomedical, Inc. is a Providence, Rhode Island-based biopharma company with an innovative business model that accelerates the development and commercialization of scientifically compelling assets from research universities and medical centers. Ocean Biomedical deploys the funding and expertise to move new therapeutic candidates efficiently from the laboratory to the clinic, to the world. Ocean Biomedical is currently developing five promising discoveries that have the potential to achieve life-changing outcomes in lung cancer, brain cancer, pulmonary fibrosis, and the prevention and treatment of malaria. The Ocean Biomedical team is working on solving some of the world's toughest problems, for the people who need it most.

To learn more, visit www.oceanbiomedical.com

Forward-Looking Statements

This press release contains certain statements that are not historical facts and are forward-looking statements within the meaning of the federal securities laws with respect to the proposed Transaction between Aesther and Ocean Biomedical, including without limitation statements regarding the anticipated benefits of the proposed Transaction, the anticipated timing of the proposed Transaction, the implied enterprise value, future financial condition and performance of Ocean Biomedical and the combined company after the closing and expected financial impacts of the proposed Transaction, the satisfaction of closing conditions to the proposed Transaction, the level of redemptions of Aesther's public stockholders and the products and markets and expected future performance and market opportunities of Ocean Biomedical. These forward-looking statements generally are identified by the words "believe," "project," "expect," "anticipate," "estimate," "intend," "think," "strategy," "future," "opportunity," "potential," "plan," "seeks," "may," "should," "will," "would," "will be," "will continue," "will likely result," and similar expressions, but the absence of these words does not mean that a statement is not forward-looking. Forward-looking statements are predictions, projections and other statements about future events that are based on current expectations and assumptions and, as a result, are subject to risks and uncertainties.

The announcement today is based solely on laboratory and animal studies. Ocean Biomedical has not conducted any studies that show similar efficacy or safety in humans. There can be no assurances that this treatment will prove safe or effective in humans, and that any clinical benefits of this treatment is subject to clinical trials and ultimate approval of its use in patients by the FDA. Such approval, if granted, could be years away.

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 factors could cause actual future events to differ materially from the forward-looking statements in this communication, including but not limited to: (i) the risk that the proposed Transaction may not be completed in a timely manner or at all, which may adversely affect the price of Aesther's securities; (ii) the risk that the proposed Transaction may not be completed by Aesther's business combination deadline; (iii) the failure to satisfy the conditions to the consummation of the proposed Transaction, including the approval of the Merger Agreement by the stockholders of Aesther, the satisfaction of the minimum net tangible assets and minimum cash at closing requirements and the receipt of certain governmental, regulatory and third party approvals; (iv) the occurrence of any event, change or other circumstance that could give rise to the termination of the Merger Agreement; (v) the failure to achieve the minimum amount of cash available following any redemptions by Aesther's stockholders; (vi) redemptions exceeding anticipated levels or the failure to meet The Nasdaq Global Market's initial listing standards in connection with the consummation of the proposed Transaction; (vii) the effect of the announcement or pendency of the proposed Transaction on Ocean Biomedical's business relationships, operating results, and business generally; (viii) risks that the proposed Transaction disrupts current plans and operations of Ocean Biomedical; (ix) the outcome of any legal proceedings that may be instituted against Ocean Biomedical or against Aesther related to the Merger Agreement or the proposed Transaction; (x) changes in the markets in which Ocean Biomedical's competes, including with respect to its competitive landscape, technology evolution, or regulatory changes; (xi) changes in domestic and global general economic conditions; (xii) risk that Ocean Biomedical may not be able to execute its growth strategies; (xiii) risks related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and response, including supply chain disruptions; (xiv) risk that Ocean Biomedical may not be able to develop and maintain effective internal controls; (xv) costs related to the proposed Transaction and the failure to realize anticipated benefits of the proposed Transaction or to realize estimated pro forma results and underlying assumptions, including with respect to estimated stockholder redemptions; (xvi) the ability to recognize the anticipated benefits of the proposed Transaction and to achieve its commercialization and development plans, and identify and realize additional opportunities, which may be affected by, among other things, competition, the ability of Ocean Biomedical to grow and manage growth economically and hire and retain key employees; (xvii) the risk that Ocean Biomedical may fail to keep pace with rapid technological developments to provide new and innovative products and services or make substantial investments in unsuccessful new products and services; (xviii) the ability to develop, license or acquire new therapeutics; (xix) the risk that Ocean Biomedical will need to raise additional capital to execute its business plan, which may not be available on acceptable terms or at all; (xx) the risk that Ocean Biomedical, post-combination, experiences difficulties in managing its growth and expanding operations; (xxi) the risk of product liability or regulatory lawsuits or proceedings relating to Ocean Biomedical's business; (xxii) the risk of cyber security or foreign exchange losses; (xxiii) the risk that Ocean Biomedical is unable to secure or protect its intellectual property; and (xxiv) those factors discussed in Aesther's filings with the SEC and that that will be contained in the proxy statement relating to the proposed Transaction .

The foregoing list of factors is not exhaustive. You should carefully consider the foregoing factors and the other risks and uncertainties that will be described in the "Risk Factors" section of the preliminary proxy statement and the amendments thereto, the definitive proxy statement, and other documents to be filed by Aesther from time to time with the SEC. These filings identify and address other important risks and uncertainties that could cause actual events and results to differ materially from those contained in the forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements speak only as of the date they are made. Readers are cautioned not to put undue reliance on forward-looking statements, and while Ocean Biomedical and Aesther may elect to update these forward-looking statements at some point in the future, they assume no obligation to update or revise these forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise, except as required by applicable law. Neither of Ocean Biomedical or Aesther gives any assurance that Ocean Biomedical or Aesther, or the combined company, will achieve its expectations. These forward-looking statements should not be relied upon as representing Aesther's or Ocean Biomedical's assessments as of any date subsequent to the date of this press release. Accordingly, undue reliance should not be placed upon the forward-looking statements.

Additional Information and Where to Find It

In connection with the Merger Agreement and the proposed Transaction, Aesther intends to file with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (the "SEC") a proxy statement on Schedule 14A relating to the proposed Transaction. This communication is not intended to be, and is not, a substitute for the proxy statement or any other document that Aesther has filed or may file with the SEC in connection with the proposed Transaction. Aesther's stockholders and other interested persons are advised to read, when available, the preliminary proxy statement and the amendments thereto, the definitive proxy statement and documents incorporated by reference therein filed in connection with the proposed Transaction, as these materials will contain important information about Aesther, Ocean Biomedical, the Merger Agreement, and the proposed Transaction. When available, the definitive proxy statement and other relevant materials for the proposed Transaction will be mailed to stockholders of Aesther as of a record date to be established for voting on the proposed Transaction. Before making any voting or investment decision, investors and stockholders of Aesther are urged to carefully read the entire proxy statement, when they become available, and any other relevant documents filed with the SEC, as well as any amendments or supplements to these documents, because they will contain important information about the proposed Transaction. Aesther investors and stockholders will also be able to obtain copies of the preliminary proxy statement, the definitive proxy statement, and other documents filed with the SEC that will be incorporated by reference therein, without charge, once available, at the SEC's website at www.sec.gov, or by directing a request to: Aesther Healthcare Acquisition Corp., 515 Madison Avenue, Suite 8078, New York, NY 10022, Attention: Mr. Suren Ajarapu.

Participants in the Solicitation

Aesther, Ocean Biomedical and their respective directors, executive officers, other members of management and employees may be deemed

participants in the solicitation of proxies from Aesther's stockholders with respect to the proposed Transaction. Investors and security holders may obtain more detailed information regarding the names and interests in the proposed Transaction of Aesther's directors and officers in Aesther's filings with the SEC, including, when filed with the SEC, the preliminary proxy statement and the amendments thereto, the definitive proxy statement, and other documents filed with the SEC. Such information with respect to Ocean Biomedical's directors and executive officers will also be included in the proxy statement.

No Offer or Solicitation

This press release is not a solicitation of a proxy, consent or authorization with respect to any securities or in respect of the proposed Transaction and will not constitute an offer to sell or the solicitation of an offer to buy any securities, nor will there be any sale of securities in any states or jurisdictions in which such offer, solicitation or sale would be unlawful prior to registration or qualification under the securities laws of any such jurisdiction.

Investor Contact

IR@aestherhealthcarespac.com

Ocean Biomedical Media Relations

Kevin Kertscher

Communications Director

kkertscher@oceanbiomedical.com