Synta Announces Appointment of Dvorit Samid, Ph.D., as Vice President, Medical Affairs

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LEXINGTON, Mass.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Mar. 12, 2012-- Synta Pharmaceuticals Corp. (NASDAQ: **SNTA**) today announced the appointment of Dr. Dvorit Samid as Vice President of Medical Affairs.

“Dr. Samid’s three decades of oncology research and drug development experience, and her relationships with leading investigators around the world in lung cancer, breast cancer, colon cancer and other indications will be a tremendous asset to us at Synta in advancing our lead clinical programs,” said Safi Bahcall, Ph.D., President and Chief Executive Officer, Synta Pharmaceuticals. “From her early work as Section Chief at the National Cancer Institute, to her lead role in Medical Affairs at Roche, ImClone and Abraxis Oncology in building awareness and successfully launching certain widely-used anti-cancer drugs, Dr. Samid has built a strong reputation in successfully communicating the science and medical potential of novel, important compounds. We are excited to have Dvorit join Synta to help us in the clinical and pre-commercial development of ganetespib.”

Ganetespib is a potent inhibitor of heat shock protein 90 (Hsp90) that is structurally unrelated to first-generation, ansamycin-family Hsp90 inhibitors and is being evaluated in over 20 clinical trials ongoing, recently completed, or currently initiating. Over 500 patients have been treated to date with ganetespib. In these trials, ganetespib has demonstrated strong single-agent clinical activity, with a favorable safety profile, in patients with several different types of cancer, including lung cancer and breast cancer, who have failed to respond to, or progressed following treatment with, multiple prior therapies. A Phase 2b/3 trial evaluating the combination of ganetespib and docetaxel in patients with non-small cell lung cancer who have progressed following treatment with first-line therapy, the GALAXY trial, is ongoing with data readouts expected later this year. Ganetespib has also shown strong single-agent clinical activity in patients with ALK+ lung cancer, as well as patients with HER2+ and triple-negative breast cancer. A global clinical trial evaluating ganetespib in approximately 100 patients with ALK+ lung cancer, who have not been previously treated with a direct ALK inhibitor, is now initiating.

“This is a very exciting time to be joining Synta,” said Dr. Samid. “There are very few late-stage drug candidates in the industry that have both demonstrated compelling single-agent anti-cancer activity in multiple tumor types and have such a favorable safety profile. Chaperone inhibition represents an entirely new approach to the treatment of cancer, which offers potential both in molecularly targeted patient populations, such as ALK+ lung cancer, and more broadly, in combination. Ganetespib is positioned to be first to market - the first compound to unlock the true potential of this approach for treating patients with cancer. I am delighted to have the opportunity to work with Synta and apply the experience and relationships I have developed towards advancing this program to registration and commercialization.”

Dr. Samid has extensive experience in oncology drug development including clinical development,

launch and life-cycle management of drugs in lung cancer (Erbitux), breast cancer (Abraxane, Xeloda), and colorectal cancer (Xeloda). Her career spans academia (University of Virginia Medical School), government (Section Chief – Differentiation Control, National Cancer Institute/National Institutes of Health Division of Cancer Treatment) and pharmaceutical industry (Roche, ImClone and others).

Dr. Samid holds a Ph.D. in Cell Biology from Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., completed graduate studies in Biology at Technion Institute in Haifa, Israel and holds a B.Sc. in Microbiology from Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Israel. Dr. Samid has authored over 80 publications in oncology and holds 19 patents.

About Ganetespib

Ganetespib is the most advanced of the next-generation, synthetic Hsp90 inhibitors with over 450 patients treated to date and 20 trials recently completed, currently initiating, or actively enrolling, including the global Phase 2b/3 GALAXY trial™ in second-line non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC).

Ganetespib has shown anti-tumor activity in heavily pretreated patients with lung cancer, breast cancer, and other tumor types and has been well tolerated with no evidence of severe liver or common ocular toxicities seen with other Hsp90 inhibitors. The most common adverse event seen to date has been grade 1 or 2 diarrhea, which has been transient and manageable with standard supportive care.

Interim results from the 240-patient Phase 2b portion of the GALAXY trial are expected in the first half of 2012, and final data in the second half of the year. Interim results from trials in ALK+ NSCLC and in breast cancer are also expected in the second half of 2012.

Information on clinical trials with ganetespib can be found at www.clinicaltrials.gov.

About Hsp90

Hsp90 is a molecular chaperone required for the proper folding and activation of many cancer-promoting proteins, and is recognized as a key facilitator of cancer cell growth and survival. Many of the “client proteins” of Hsp90 – such as ALK, AKT, BCR-ABL, BRAF, KIT, MET, EGFR, FLT3, HER2, PDGFRA, VEGFR are the targets of clinically validated cancer drugs. In preclinical studies, inhibiting Hsp90 causes the degradation of multiple client proteins and leads to cancer cell death.

About Synta Pharmaceuticals

Synta Pharmaceuticals Corp. is a biopharmaceutical company focused on discovering, developing, and commercializing small molecule drugs to extend and enhance the lives of patients with severe medical conditions, including cancer and chronic inflammatory diseases. Synta has a unique chemical compound library, an integrated discovery engine, and a diverse pipeline of clinical- and preclinical-stage drug candidates with distinct mechanisms of action and novel chemical structures. All Synta drug candidates were invented by Synta scientists using our compound library and discovery capabilities. For more information, please visit www.syntapharma.com.

Safe Harbor Statement

This media release may contain forward-looking statements about Synta Pharmaceuticals Corp.

Such forward-looking statements can be identified by the use of forward-looking terminology such as "will", "would", "should", "expects", "anticipates", "intends", "plans", "believes", "may", "estimates", "predicts", "projects", or similar expressions intended to identify forward-looking statements. Such statements, including statements relating to the timing, developments and progress of our ganetespib clinical program, reflect our current views with respect to future events and are based on assumptions and subject to risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from those expressed or implied by such forward-looking statements, including those described in "Risk Factors" of our Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2011 as filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Synta undertakes no obligation to publicly update forward-looking statements, whether because of new information, future events or otherwise, except as required by law.

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