Pliant Therapeutics Announces Publication Demonstrating Feasibility of Positron Emission Tomography (PET) Tracers for Imaging Fibrosis in Patients with Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis

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Research, conducted in collaboration with Stanford University School of Medicine, published in Nature Communications

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO — October 15, 2019— Pliant Therapeutics, Inc., a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company focused on the discovery and development of novel therapies for the treatment of fibrosis, announced the publication of a study evaluating the use of a positron emission tomography (PET) tracer for the detection of idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF) through the recognition of protein integrin a_vb_6. The results of the pilot clinical study encourage evaluation of PET tracers for diagnosis, staging of disease, patient stratification in trials, treatment selection and monitoring of therapy. The study, "Evaluation of Integrin a_vb_6 Cystine Knot PET Tracers to Detect Cancer and Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis," conducted in collaboration with researchers from the Stanford University School of Medicine, is published in Nature Communications.

"Despite significant study in this field, biomarkers are urgently needed to monitor and assess treatment responses in clinical trials in IPF, a progressive, fibrotic lung disease. The lack of adequate tools necessitates large and lengthy clinical trials that slow the pace at which new therapies can be evaluated and potentially brought to market," said Scott Turner, Ph.D., vice president of translational sciences at Pliant Therapeutics.

The Pliant researchers worked in collaboration with Sanjiv Gambhir, M.D., Ph.D.professor of radiology at Stanford, to engineer a cystine knot PET ligand targeting over-expressed a_vb_6 in the lungs of patients with IPF. The accumulation of the PET tracer in the lung tissue expressing a_vb_6 provides a way to image the molecular signature of the disease. The Stanford research group continues to comprehensively evaluate these peptide-based PET tracers to image $\alpha_V\beta_6$ for diagnosis in other indications such as cancer. Pliant plans to utilize the PET tracer in a Phase 2a clinical trial evaluating its drug candidate PLN-74809 in IPF.

"The study results suggest that the PET tracers may have broad clinical application in detecting and diagnosing multiple indications, monitoring the efficacy of various therapeutics, as well as in staging diseases," said Dr. Gambhir.

About Pliant Therapeutics
Pliant Therapeutics is a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company focused on discovering and developing novel therapies for the treatment of fibrosis. Pliant seeks to slow or halt the progression of multiple life-threatening fibrotic diseases by developing targeted treatments. The company's lead product candidate, PLN-74809, is designed to be a selective inhibitor of $\alpha_v\beta_1$ and $\alpha_v\beta_6$ integrins that play a key role in multiple fibrotic pathways. Pliant has received Orphan Drug Designation from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for PLN-74809 in both idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF) and primary sclerosing cholangitis (PSC), and has completed Phase 1b testing. Pliant's second product candidate, PLN-1474, is designed to be a selective inhibitor of $\alpha_v\beta_1$, targeting late-stage liver fibrosis and is currently in IND-enabling studies. For more information, please visit www.pliantrx.com.

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