Arbutus Announces Multiple Abstracts Accepted for Oral and Poster Presentations at the EASL 2021 International Liver Congress in June

June 2, 2021

Conference Call and Webcast to discuss the new data being presented at EASL scheduled for 8:00 AM ET, Monday, June 28, 2021

WARMINSTER, Pa., June 02, 2021 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Arbutus Biopharma Corporation (Nasdaq: ABUS), a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company primarily focused on developing a cure for people with chronic hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection, as well as therapies to treat coronaviruses (including COVID-19), today announced that five abstracts have been accepted for presentation at the upcoming International Liver Congress™ (ILC), the Annual Meeting of the European Association for the Study of the Liver (EASL) in June 2021.

Arbutus will hold a conference call at 8:00 AM ET, Monday June 28, 2021 to discuss the new data being presented at EASL.

The accepted abstracts include two oral presentations, one of which is a late breaker, and three poster presentations. The presentation details and schedules are as follows:

Oral Presentations

LBO-2764

Title: Repeat dosing of the GalNAc-siRNA AB-729 in subjects with chronic hepatitis B results in robust and sustained HBsAg suppression

Presenter: Prof. Man-Fung Yuen, D.Sc., M.D., Ph.D., Deputy Head of Department, Chief of Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology, Master of Lap Chee, University of Hong Kong.

Session: Late Breaker June 26, 2021 / 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM CET (6:00 AM – 7:30 AM ET)

AB-729 Presentation Time: 1:15 PM CET (7:15 AM ET)

OS-595

Title: Preclinical antiviral profile of AB-836, a potent highly selective hepatitis B virus capsid inhibitor

Presenter: Dr. Nagraj Mani, Ph.D., Research Fellow, Arbutus Biopharma Corp.

Session: Hepatitis B: Novel Therapeutic Approaches

Session Date / Time: June 25, 2021 / 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM CET (8:00 AM – 9:30 AM ET)

AB-836 Presentation Time: 2:45 PM CET (8:45 AM ET)

Presentation available to ILC participants on June 21, 2021 at 10:00 AM CET (4:00 AM ET)

Poster Presentations

Poster 2823

Title: Inhibition of hepatitis B surface antigen in chronic hepatitis B subjects by RNA interference therapeutic AB-729 is accompanied by upregulation of HBV-specific T cell activation markers

Presenter: Dr. Emily Thi, Ph.D., Director, Immunology and Biomarkers, Arbutus Biopharma Corp.

Poster available to ILC participants on June 21, 2021 at 10:00 AM CET (4:00 AM ET)

Poster 2822

Title: Inhibition of hepatitis B surface antigen by RNA interference therapeutic AB-729 in chronic hepatitis B patients correlates with suppression of all HBsAg isoforms and HBV RNA

Presenter: Dr. Bhavna Paratala, Ph.D., Senior Scientist, Immunology and Biomarkers, Arbutus Biopharma Corp.

Poster available to ILC participants on June 21, 2021 at 10:00 AM CET (4:00 AM ET)

Poster 2829

Title: A single dose of the GalNAc-siRNA, AB-729, results in prolonged reductions in HBsAg, HBcrAg, HBV DNA and HBV RNA in the absence of nucleos(t)ide analogue therapy in HBeAg negative subjects with chronic hepatitis B infection

Presenter: Prof. Edward Gane, M.D., Professor of Medicine at the University of Auckland, New Zealand and Chief Hepatologist, Transplant Physician and Deputy Director of the New Zealand Liver Transplant Unit

Poster available to ILC participants on June 21, 2021 at 10:00 AM CET (4:00 AM ET)

About AB-729

AB-729 is an RNA interference (RNAi) therapeutic targeted to hepatocytes using Arbutus' novel covalently conjugated N-acetylgalactosamine (GalNAc) delivery technology that enables subcutaneous delivery. AB-729 inhibits viral replication and reduces all HBV antigens, including hepatitis B surface antigen in preclinical models. Reducing hepatitis B surface antigen is thought to be a key prerequisite to enable reawakening of a patient's immune system to respond to the virus. Based upon clinical data generated thus far in an ongoing single- and multi-dose Phase 1a/1b clinical trial, AB-729 has demonstrated positive safety and tolerability data and meaningful reductions in hepatitis B surface antigen.

About AB-836

AB-836 is an oral HBV capsid inhibitor. HBV core protein assembles into a capsid structure, which is required for viral replication. The current standard-of-care therapy for HBV, primarily nucleos(t)ide analogues that work by inhibiting the viral polymerase, significantly reduce virus replication, but not completely. Capsid inhibitors inhibit replication by preventing the assembly of functional viral capsids. They also have been shown to inhibit the uncoating step of the viral life cycle thus reducing the formation of new covalently closed circular DNA (cccDNA), the genetic reservoir which the virus uses to replicate itself.

About HBV

Hepatitis B is a potentially life-threatening liver infection caused by HBV. HBV can cause chronic infection which leads to a higher risk of death from cirrhosis and liver cancer. Chronic HBV infection represents a significant unmet medical need. The World Health Organization estimates that over 250 million people worldwide suffer from chronic HBV infection, while other estimates indicate that approximately 2 million people in the United States suffer from chronic HBV infection. Approximately 900,000 people die every year from complications related to chronic HBV infection despite the availability of effective vaccines and current treatment options.

About Arbutus

Arbutus Biopharma Corporation is a publicly traded (Nasdaq: ABUS) biopharmaceutical company primarily focused on discovering, developing and commercializing a cure for people with chronic hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection. The Company is advancing multiple product candidates with distinct mechanisms of action that it believes have the potential to provide a new curative regimen for chronic HBV infection. Arbutus has also initiated a drug discovery and development effort for treating coronaviruses (including COVID-19). For more information, visit www.arbutusbio.com.

Forward-Looking Statements and Information

This press release contains forward-looking statements within the meaning of the Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933 and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, and forward-looking information within the meaning of Canadian securities laws (collectively, "forward-looking statements"). Forward-looking statements in this press release include, but may not be limited to, statements about Arbutus' expectations regarding the potential for its product candidates to provide a curative regimen for chronic HBV infection.

With respect to the forward-looking statements contained in this press release, Arbutus has made numerous assumptions regarding, among other things: the effectiveness and timeliness of preclinical studies and clinical trials, and the usefulness of the data; the timeliness of regulatory approvals; the continued demand for Arbutus' assets; and the stability of economic and market conditions. While Arbutus considers these assumptions to be reasonable, these assumptions are inherently subject to significant business, economic, competitive, market and social uncertainties and contingencies, including uncertainties and contingencies related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Additionally, there are known and unknown risk factors which could cause Arbutus' actual results, performance or achievements to be materially different from any future results, performance or achievements expressed or implied by the forward-looking statements contained herein. Known risk factors include, among others: anticipated pre-clinical studies and clinical trials may be more costly or take longer to complete than anticipated, and may never be initiated or completed, or may not generate results that warrant future development of the tested drug candidate; Arbutus may elect to change its strategy regarding its product candidates and clinical development activities; Arbutus may not receive the necessary regulatory approvals for the clinical development of Arbutus' products; economic and market conditions may worsen; market shifts may require a change in strategic focus; and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic could significantly disrupt Arbutus' clinical development programs.

A more complete discussion of the risks and uncertainties facing Arbutus appears in Arbutus' Annual Report on Form 10-K, Arbutus' Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q and Arbutus' continuous and periodic disclosure filings, which are available at www.sedar.com and at sec.report. All forward-looking statements herein are qualified in their entirety by this cautionary statement, and Arbutus disclaims any obligation to revise or update any such forward-looking statements or to publicly announce the result of any revisions to any of the forward-looking statements contained herein to reflect future results, events or developments, except as required by law.

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