



Casebia Therapeutics Press Release: Casebia Therapeutics Announces Appointment of James W. Burns, Ph.D. as President and Chief Executive Officer

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Joint venture between CRISPR Therapeutics and Bayer grounds leadership team presence in Cambridge, MA with strategic Chief Executive Officer hire

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. -- ([BUSINESS WIRE](#))--Casebia Therapeutics, the joint venture founded by Bayer and CRISPR Therapeutics, today announced that James W. Burns, Ph.D. has been appointed President and Chief Executive Officer. Dr. Burns brings to Casebia Therapeutics nearly 30 years of R&D experience in the biopharmaceutical industry and a proven track record of leading R&D organizations that have successfully delivered therapeutics to patients.

Prior to joining Casebia, Dr. Burns spent the bulk of his career at Sanofi-Genzyme. First joining Genzyme in 1986, he had several leadership roles with increasing responsibility. Most recently as the Head of Sanofi's North American R&D Hub, Dr. Burns was responsible for coordinating R&D operations across key therapeutic areas.

Dr. Burns is a former board member of MassBio, a member of the U.S. National Academy of Engineering and is Chair of the External Advisory Committee for the Biomedical Engineering Department at Boston University. He served from 1996-1999 as the Industry Representative for the Food and Drug Administration General and Plastic Surgery Panel.

Dr. Burns earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from Purdue University, and Master of Science and Doctorate degrees in Bioengineering from the University of Illinois-Chicago, where his thesis work focused on drug delivery. Following his graduate studies, Dr. Burns was a post-doctoral researcher at the University of Florida.

"Jim is a strategic leader and uniquely qualified to lead Casebia with expertise spanning a wide range of rare diseases and technology platforms, and he will provide a great background to build and position the company as a strong force within the industry," said Dr. Rodger Novak, currently Chairman of the Casebia Board and Chief Executive Officer and Founder of CRISPR Therapeutics. "I would like to thank Dr. Axel Bouchon for his leadership and commitment to lead the initial building phase of Casebia, serving as the interim CEO." Dr. Bouchon will continue his work as Director of the Board of Casebia.

"Jim has demonstrated comprehensive effectiveness in building and retaining a premium team of top talents – a quality absolutely crucial for Casebia," said Dr. Axel Bouchon, Head of The Bayer Life Science Center and Interim CEO of Casebia. "We have great expectations and are convinced that Jim is the perfect leader to execute the mission of this powerful joint venture by cultivating a strong presence and influence in the life sciences and biotech communities in Boston and in our San Francisco hub."

"I am thrilled to join Casebia and spearhead the company towards creating novel CRISPR/Cas9-based therapies," said James W. Burns, Ph.D. "With access to cutting-edge gene-editing CRISPR/Cas9 technology, protein engineering expertise, a strong financial foundation, and with Boston's incredible network of talent and partners, we have all the tools needed to create a potentially transformative new class of therapies for patients."

In August, Casebia announced a sublease agreement for its primary base of operations in Cambridge, MA. The headquarters will be approximately 33,000 square feet of laboratory and office space, and will be co-located with CRISPR Therapeutics. The company will enter its new location in early 2017. Hiring is underway to fully staff Casebia's research and development organization, which has begun research efforts on its initial therapeutic programs.

About Casebia Therapeutics

Casebia Therapeutics is a novel joint venture between Bayer and CRISPR Therapeutics, focused on discovering, developing and commercializing new CRISPR/Cas9-based breakthrough therapeutics to treat blood disorders, blindness, and heart disease. Formed in the first quarter of 2016, the company began operations in the U.S. in August of 2016. Casebia has access to gene-editing technology from CRISPR Therapeutics in specific disease areas, as well as access to protein engineering expertise and relevant disease know-how through Bayer. Casebia is a free-standing entity, equally owned by Bayer and CRISPR Therapeutics, with its own scientific leadership and management team. The company's Board of Directors has equal composition from Bayer and CRISPR Therapeutics. Casebia's primary base of research operations is in Cambridge, MA, with a second site in San Francisco, CA.

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