

## **Sunesis Pharmaceuticals Announces Support of First-Ever Acute Myeloid Leukemia Awareness Month in June**

May 25, 2016 9:02 AM ET

Sunesis Provides Educational Grant to Support Campaign Sponsor CancerCare

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO, Calif., May 25, 2016 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Sunesis Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (Nasdaq:SNSS) today announced its support for the first-ever Acute Myeloid Leukemia Awareness Month to be held in June. The goal of the campaign, which is being sponsored by CancerCare, is to put a spotlight on the disease, a rare and difficult-to-treat blood cancer that typically affects older adults.

Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML) is a cancer of the blood and bone marrow and can worsen quickly if left untreated. According to the National Institutes of Health, it is estimated that there will be 19,950 new cases of acute myeloid leukemia in 2016 and an estimated 10,430 people will die from the disease. AML is more common in older adults, who are also the most difficult to treat, with 67 as the median age of diagnosis. While progress in treating leukemia has been made, there has been only one AML treatment approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in the past 30 years (and that drug was subsequently withdrawn from the market).

Patricia J. Goldsmith, CEO of CancerCare, said, “AML Awareness Month will feature in-depth information about AML on the organization’s website, including a video that features NBA broadcaster Craig Sager who is battling the disease, as well as his son, Craig, Jr., who donated his bone marrow twice in an effort to save his father. The website will also offer people living with AML and their caregivers easy-to-use, informative resources to understand their condition. We thank Sunesis Pharmaceuticals for their unrestricted educational grant which has helped to support the development of these resources.”

“We are delighted to be supporting CancerCare’s efforts to raise awareness of acute myeloid leukemia,” said Daniel Swisher, Chief Executive Officer of Sunesis. “Because it is a rare disease with an older patient population, there has been little attention focused on AML. As a company that is determined to deliver a new treatment option for this disease, we want to support the AML community by helping to provide more education and information for patients and caregivers.”

Goldsmith added, “The AML community’s voice has not always been heard because the disease itself is so rare and the mortality rate is so high. We hope to put a spotlight on AML in June and help focus attention on the urgent need these patients and their families have for hope.”

Patients and caregivers can find educational resources on AML online at [www.cancercare.org](http://www.cancercare.org); an unrestricted educational grant from Sunesis has helped to support the development of the informational resources on AML which also includes a patient and caregiver workshop webinar to be held on June 17.

### **About CancerCare®**

Founded in 1944, CancerCare is the leading national organization providing free, professional support services and information to help people manage the emotional, practical and financial challenges of cancer. Our comprehensive services include counseling and support groups over the phone, online and in-person, educational workshops, publications and financial and co-payment assistance. All CancerCare services are provided by oncology social workers and world-leading cancer experts. Headquartered in New York, NY, CancerCare maintains three additional locations in Norwalk, CT, Ridgewood, NJ and Syosset, NY.

To learn more, visit [www.cancercare.org](http://www.cancercare.org) or call 800-813-HOPE (4673).

### **About Sunesis Pharmaceuticals**

Sunesis is a biopharmaceutical company focused on the development and commercialization of new oncology therapeutics

for the potential treatment of solid and hematologic cancers. Sunesis has built a highly experienced cancer drug development organization committed to improving the lives of people with cancer and is currently pursuing regulatory approval in Europe for its lead product candidate, vosaroxin, for the treatment of relapsed or refractory acute myeloid leukemia in patients aged 60 and older. In addition, the company is advancing its kinase-inhibitor pipeline of novel targeted therapies into the clinic.

For additional information on Sunesis, please visit <http://www.sunesis.com>.

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*This press release contains forward-looking statements, including statements related to Sunesis' corporate objectives, including the anticipated progress and potential approval of vosaroxin by the EMA, potential ex-US partnership, and the expected progress in its kinase inhibitor pipeline. Words such as "prospects," "look forward," "potential," "will" and similar expressions are intended to identify forward-looking statements. These forward-looking statements are based upon Sunesis' current expectations. Forward-looking statements involve risks and uncertainties. Sunesis' actual results and the timing of events could differ materially from those anticipated in such forward-looking statements as a result of these risks and uncertainties, which include, without limitation, the risk that Sunesis may not be able to receive regulatory approval of vosaroxin in the U.S. or Europe, that Sunesis' development activities for vosaroxin could be otherwise halted or significantly delayed for various reasons, the risk that Sunesis' clinical studies for vosaroxin or other product candidates, including its pipeline of kinase inhibitors, may not demonstrate safety or efficacy or lead to regulatory approval, the risk that data to date and trends may not be predictive of future data or results, risks related to the conduct of Sunesis' clinical trials, risks related to Sunesis' need for substantial additional funding to complete the development and commercialization of vosaroxin and other product candidates, and risks related to Sunesis' ability to raise the capital that it believes to be accessible and is required to fully finance the development and commercialization of vosaroxin and other product candidates. These and other risk factors are discussed under "Risk Factors" and elsewhere in Sunesis' Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2015 and Sunesis' other filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Sunesis expressly disclaims any obligation or undertaking to release publicly any updates or revisions to any forward-looking statements contained herein to reflect any change in Sunesis' expectations with regard thereto or any change in events, conditions or circumstances on which any such statements are based.*

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