Sunesis Pharmaceuticals Announces Promotion of Deborah A. Thomas, Ph.D., to Senior Vice President, Regulatory Affairs, Quality Assurance, and Non-Clinical Development

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SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO, Calif., Feb. 19, 2016 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Sunesis Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (Nasdaq:SNSS) today announced the promotion of Deborah A. Thomas, Ph.D., to the role of Senior Vice President, Regulatory Affairs, Quality Assurance, and Non-Clinical Development.

“Debbie is a recognized leader at Sunesis with global responsibility for all regulatory and, more recently, quality assurance aspects of the pipeline programs,” said Daniel Swisher, Chief Executive Officer of Sunesis. “I am pleased to announce this well-deserved promotion, particularly at a time when Sunesis is focused on reaching several key upcoming milestones through the ongoing review of vosaroxin’s Marketing Authorization Application in Europe and non-clinical and regulatory support for our emerging kinase pipeline programs to achieve meaningful clinical data. We look forward to her continued significant contributions to the Company.”

Dr. Thomas joined Sunesis in November 2011 as Executive Director, Regulatory Affairs, and was promoted to Vice President, Regulatory Affairs and Medical Writing, in October 2012. She has over 25 years of biotechnology and pharmaceutical industry experience, with broad-based expertise in toxicology, project leadership and regulatory affairs. Dr. Thomas came to Sunesis from BiPar Sciences, where she was Vice President, Regulatory Affairs. Prior to BiPar, Dr. Thomas served in various management positions in non-clinical development and regulatory affairs at Genentech, Inc. from 1990 to 2007. Dr. Thomas was awarded a B.S. in Microbiology and Ph.D. in toxicology from the University of Kentucky.

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.

This press release contains forward-looking statements, including statements related to Sunesis' estimated timelines for regulatory interactions and regulatory progress, including the anticipated submission of the MAA for vosaroxin with the EMA and plans to gain marketing approval of vosaroxin in the U.S., Sunesis' overall strategy, the design, conduct and results of clinical trials, including the expected progress in its kinase inhibitor pipeline, estimated new cases of AML, its prevalence across major global markets, prognosis for patients with AML, the need for and the role of vosaroxin as a potential new treatment option, and Sunesis' clinical development of vosaroxin, including the analysis of the results from the VALOR clinical trial. Words such as "anticipates," "estimates," "expect," "intends," "plan," "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 submit timely the MAA to the EMA, the risk that Sunesis' clinical studies for vosaroxin may not lead to regulatory approval 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 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 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. These and other risk factors are discussed under "Risk Factors" and elsewhere in Sunesis' Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended September 30, 2015. 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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