



## **Camino Pharma Co-Founder Receives \$10.8 Million Grant for Development of Potential Drug for Cocaine and Nicotine Addiction**

*New class of medicine is focused on treatment of substance use disorders*

**San Diego, Calif., September 27, 2017** – [Camino Pharma, LLC](#), a new start-up company focusing on finding cures for cancer and brain disorders, announced today that its Co-founder and Head of Drug Discovery, Nicholas Cosford, Ph.D., has been awarded a three-year, \$10.8 million grant by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The grant will fund a collaborative effort between the Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Research Institute (SBP), UC San Diego and Camino Pharma, LLC to advance the preclinical development of a new class of medicine for the treatment of substance use disorders, including cocaine and nicotine addiction.

“It is an exciting opportunity for Camino Pharma to join forces with SBP and UC San Diego to translate many years of research into potential treatments for people affected by nicotine and cocaine addiction,” said Gonul Velicelebi, Ph.D., Co-founder & CEO of the Company. “The lead compound, SBP-0069330, and its analogs have favorable properties, which have the potential to become highly effective and safe drugs.” SBP-0069330 can be administered orally, shows the ability to penetrate the brain, and reduces both cocaine and nicotine use and relapse in established models.

The grant will enable the multidisciplinary team of scientists to conduct the required preclinical studies to file an Investigational New Drug (IND) Application to initiate human clinical trials. “The founding team of Camino Pharma has deep expertise in the discovery and development of drugs for treating CNS disorders and a track-record of successfully moving new discoveries into the clinic,” Velicelebi stated. “This grant validates our research and allows us to pursue potential new therapeutics to address major public health problems.”

“A large body of experimental evidence suggests increased glutamate neurotransmission underlies cocaine and nicotine-seeking and relapse behavior,” noted Cosford, who is also a professor at SBP’s National Cancer Institute (NCI)-Designated Cancer Center and director of Translational Research. “Our compounds reduce glutamate neurotransmission by targeting the metabotropic glutamate receptor 2 (mGlu2) and potentially represent a new drug class.”

There are currently no FDA-approved medications for treatment of cocaine addiction, and cigarette smoking remains the leading cause of lung cancer, as well as the largest preventable cause of morbidity and mortality among adults worldwide.

### **About Camino Pharma, LLC ([www.caminopharma.com](http://www.caminopharma.com))**

Camino Pharma is a San Diego-based startup company focused on discovering and developing first-in-class therapies for patients suffering from cancer and CNS disorders. We target signaling proteins based on emerging biological concepts and discover novel mechanisms for modulating these targets with small molecule drugs. Our leadership team has proven expertise in the relevant target biology, as well as extensive experience in drug discovery and development. Our goal is to discover and develop novel, first-in-class medicines for patients suffering from 1) the most aggressive forms of cancer with currently limited treatment options, and 2) psychiatric disorders that are poorly addressed by current medications, including addiction and treatment-resistant

depression. Our innovative technology platform allows for exploiting inadequately served targets that require a highly adaptive and specialized approach to drug discovery. We intend to use our deep understanding in target biology, combined with extremely tailored, cutting-edge discovery technologies to find novel cures.

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