Merck Announces the Launch of the Merck Digital Sciences Studio to Help Healthcare Startups Quickly Bring their Innovations to Market

6/29/2022

RAHWAY, N.J.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Merck (NYSE: MRK), known as MSD outside the United States and Canada, today announced the launch of the Merck Digital Sciences Studio (MDSS) to enable the generation of innovative technologies for drug discovery and development. MDSS will support early-stage biomedical startups with direct investment, access to powerful Azure Cloud computing and opportunities to pilot their technologies in collaboration with discovery and clinical scientists at Merck. Starting today, Merck welcomes applications for 12 spots for the first MDSS cohort. Startups developing artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) applications will be prioritized.

“The biopharmaceutical industry has only just started to harness the tremendous opportunity presented by emerging technological developments in AI, and ML,” said Fiona Marshall, senior vice president, Discovery, Preclinical and Translational Medicine at Merck Research Laboratories. “The MDSS will provide a collaborative and entrepreneurial setting where scientists have access to the tools and expertise to fuel important innovations that advance drug discovery and development.”

The MDSS is a collaboration between Merck and the New Jersey Innovation Institute (NJII), a New Jersey Institute of Technology corporation, with investments from the Merck Global Health Innovation Fund, Northpond Ventures and McKesson Ventures. Technology support will be provided by Microsoft for Startups. The MDSS will have locations in Newark, NJ and Cambridge, MA.

“Startups in the biopharmaceutical industry fuel innovation, create high-quality jobs and generate great
opportunities for a stronger, more diverse and inclusive life-sciences ecosystem,” said Simon Nynens, CEO of NJII. “NJII looks forward to providing the programming, coaching, and connections to bring these ideas to life.”

Innovative digital sciences can transform approach to discovery

Digital technologies are already enabling innovation in biomarker and drug discovery and development in the areas of target identification, lead discovery, pre-clinical development, and clinical development. Through MDSS, the collaborators will selectively accelerate and pilot novel and innovative digital technologies that are strategically aligned with Merck’s life science research.

“As digital transformation continues to redefine what’s possible in healthcare, startups are at the forefront of delivering new approaches and technologies to the industry,” said Sally Frank, Global Lead, Health and Life Sciences, Microsoft for Startups. “Merck Digital Sciences Studio provides an onramp for startup founders to quickly bring their ideas to market with the strength of a global healthcare leader like Merck behind them. Through Microsoft for Startups Founders Hub startups in the MDSS will gain access to powerful technologies including Microsoft 365 and Azure as well as expert business advice and technical support.”

Currently the program plans to include six startups at each of the Newark, NJ and Cambridge, MA venues. Entrepreneurs interested in applying, please visit the MDSS website.

McDermott Will & Emery provided counsel and FLG Partners provided CFO services in the creation of MDSS.

About Merck

At Merck, known as MSD outside of the United States and Canada, we are unified around our purpose: We use the power of leading-edge science to save and improve lives around the world. For more than 130 years, we have brought hope to humanity through the development of important medicines and vaccines. We aspire to be the premier research-intensive biopharmaceutical company in the world – and today, we are at the forefront of research to deliver innovative health solutions that advance the prevention and treatment of diseases in people and animals. We foster a diverse and inclusive global workforce and operate responsibly every day to enable a safe, sustainable and healthy future for all people and communities. For more information, visit www.merck.com and connect with us on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn.

Forward-Looking Statement of Merck & Co., Inc., Rahway, N.J., USA

This news release of Merck & Co., Inc., Rahway, N.J., USA (the “company”) includes “forward-looking statements” within the meaning of the safe harbor provisions of the U.S. Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. These
statements are based upon the current beliefs and expectations of the company's management and are subject to significant risks and uncertainties. If underlying assumptions prove inaccurate or risks or uncertainties materialize, actual results may differ materially from those set forth in the forward-looking statements.

Risks and uncertainties include but are not limited to, general industry conditions and competition; general economic factors, including interest rate and currency exchange rate fluctuations; the impact of the global outbreak of novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19); the impact of pharmaceutical industry regulation and health care legislation in the United States and internationally; global trends toward health care cost containment; technological advances, new products and patents attained by competitors; challenges inherent in new product development, including obtaining regulatory approval; the company's ability to accurately predict future market conditions; manufacturing difficulties or delays; financial instability of international economies and sovereign risk; dependence on the effectiveness of the company's patents and other protections for innovative products; and the exposure to litigation, including patent litigation, and/or regulatory actions.

The company undertakes no obligation to publicly update any forward-looking statement, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise. Additional factors that could cause results to differ materially from those described in the forward-looking statements can be found in the company's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2021 and the company's other filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) available at the SEC's Internet site (www.sec.gov).

View source version on businesswire.com: https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20220629005365/en/

Media:

Melissa Moody  
(215) 407-3536

Ian McConnell  
(973) 901-5722

Investor:

Peter Dannenbaum  
(908) 740-1037

Damini Chokshi  
(908) 740-1807