Sangamo BioSciences Receives Michael J. Fox Foundation Funding to Develop Novel Drug for the Treatment of Parkinson's Disease

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RICHMOND, Calif., July 1 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Sangamo BioSciences, Inc. (Nasdaq: SGMO [1]) announced today that it has been awarded a second round of funding by The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research (MJFF) to support studies in non-human primates for the development of a ZFP Therapeutic™ to treat Parkinson's disease (PD). The $900,000 award will be paid over a period of two years.

Sangamo has developed zinc finger DNA-binding protein transcription factors (ZFP TFs) to activate the expression of glial cell line-derived neurotrophic factor (GDNF), a potent neurotrophic factor that has shown promise in preclinical testing to slow or stop the progression of Parkinson's disease. In earlier preclinical studies also funded by MJFF and carried out by Sangamo scientists and their collaborators, a ZFP TF activator of GDNF was shown to be neuroprotective, resulting in positive functional improvements in a validated rat model of PD.

"We are very enthusiastic about this novel ZFP Therapeutic approach to Parkinson's disease," said Krystof Bankiewicz, M.D., Ph.D., Professor of Neurosurgery and Neurology at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), whose group is collaborating with Sangamo on the preclinical animal studies. "We believe that GDNF is an excellent therapeutic target for PD. However, using a ZFP TF to turn on the expression of the native GDNF gene in the brain rather than adding GDNF protein or a copy of the GDNF gene, enables the achievement of physiological levels of this potent neuroprotective factor. Based on our earlier success with a ZFP activator of GDNF in the rat model we look
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