



## **Ikena Appoints Michelle Zhang, Ph.D., Industry and Company Veteran, as Chief Scientific Officer**

December 8, 2021

*Dr. Zhang steps into the CSO role after spending more than five years at Ikena in research and development leadership*

*Jeffrey Ecsedy, Ph.D., taking on newly created role as Chief Development Officer (CDO) to guide expanding development pipeline*

BOSTON, Dec. 08, 2021 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Ikena Oncology, Inc. (Nasdaq: IKNA, "Ikena"), a targeted oncology company navigating new territory in patient-directed cancer treatment, today announced the internal promotion of Michelle Zhang, Ph.D., to Chief Scientific Officer (CSO), effective as of late November 2021. Dr. Zhang, one of Ikena's first employees, has served many roles over her tenure at Ikena, most recently as Senior Vice President of Translational Research and Early Development at Ikena.

"Michelle's vigor and passion for our work and extensive experience in oncology drug discovery and development have made her an invaluable member of the team. We are thrilled to increase her responsibilities and welcome her to the senior leadership team," said Mark Manfredi, Ph.D., Chief Executive Officer of Ikena. "As we continue to advance our targeted oncology therapies, we are constantly evaluating the cancer landscape for new opportunities to expand our pipeline and to best serve patients with difficult to treat cancer types. The elevation of Michelle to CSO and Jeff in his new role as CDO will allow them both to serve new and essential responsibilities to support our evolving pipeline."

As CSO, Dr. Zhang is primarily responsible for overseeing and executing Ikena's research strategy, advancing discovery programs through target validation and lead optimization toward development candidate nominations and IND filings.

"At Ikena, we're constantly striving to develop therapies that move us closer to our vision of a world where every cancer patient has a cure," said Dr. Zhang. "I have always been passionate about the work we do, the team we have built, and the culture of dedication to patients we have fostered. I am thrilled to be joining the inspiring group of leaders on our management team to continue our work towards redefining patient-driven targeted oncology."

Michelle Zhang, Ph.D., joined Ikena (then Kyn Therapeutics) in 2016 as Vice President, Research and Development and was later promoted to Senior Vice President, Translational Research and Early Development. At Ikena, she has guided critical progress of the company's pipeline programs to clinical studies. Dr. Zhang has over 20 years of oncology drug discovery and development experience in biotech as an entrepreneur in residence at Atlas Venture as well as at Curis, Inc. and BioMed Valley Discoveries, and in pharma at Novartis Institutes for Biomedical Research. Her R&D expertise spans across small molecule, antibody, antibody-drug-conjugate, protein and radiopharmaceutical therapeutic and diagnostic modalities. She has led numerous programs from early discovery, translational research and non-clinical evaluations into clinical development. Dr. Zhang received her Ph.D. in Biochemistry from Harvard University.

Jeffrey Ecsedy, Ph.D., has stepped to Chief Development Officer (CDO), a newly created role to drive Ikena's growing clinical-stage pipeline. Dr. Ecsedy is taking on broader development responsibilities, including translational research, clinical pharmacology, non-clinical safety, program leadership and manufacturing responsibilities. In his role as CSO, Dr. Ecsedy was a key leader in building and expanding Ikena's research and development capabilities, as well as establishing a robust oncology pipeline including leading three approved INDs, most recently for Ikena's TEAD inhibitor IK-930.

Dr. Ecsedy commented, "This transition of responsibilities parallels Ikena's next phase of growth to a mid-to-late clinical-stage company. I know Michelle will effectively and efficiently drive our early-stage discovery and preclinical R&D in her new role and I am thrilled to be able to continue to partner with her in our new roles."

### **About Ikena Oncology**

Ikena Oncology is focused on developing novel therapies targeting key signaling pathways that drive the formation and spread of cancer. The Company's lead targeted oncology program, IK-930, is a TEAD inhibitor addressing the Hippo signaling pathway, a known tumor suppressor pathway that also drives resistance to multiple targeted therapies. Additional programs include an ERK5 inhibitor program targeting the KRAS signaling pathway and programs targeting the tumor microenvironment and immune signals, two of which are being developed in collaboration with Bristol Myers Squibb, including IK-175, an aryl hydrocarbon receptor antagonist designed to modulate the tumor microenvironment. Ikena's pipeline is built on addressing genetically defined or biomarker-driven cancers and developing therapies that can serve specific patient populations in need of new therapeutic options. To learn more, visit [www.ikenaoncology.com](http://www.ikenaoncology.com) or follow us on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

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