



## Hochschulmedizin Zurich and Alnylam Host Innovative Medicine Lecture on the Discovery and Clinical Applications of RNA interference (RNAi)

October 29, 2018

– Nobel Prize Winner Professor Phillip Sharp, PhD, to co-present lecture –

ZURICH--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Oct. 29, 2018-- [Alnylam Pharmaceuticals, Inc.](#) (Nasdaq: ALNY), the leading RNAi therapeutics company, and Hochschulmedizin Zurich, coordinating medical research between academic and medical institutions in Zurich, jointly announced that the inaugural lecture of the newly established Innovative Medicine Lecture Series will be held in Zurich today.

The lecture is being co-presented by Nobel Prize winner Professor Phillip Sharp, PhD, the Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Dr Akshay Vaishnav, MD, PhD, Head of Research and Development at Alnylam, who will share unique insights into the discovery and clinical applications of RNA interference (RNAi). RNAi is a natural cellular process of gene silencing that regulates gene expression, and its discovery in 1998 was heralded as a revolutionary scientific breakthrough in understanding how genes are regulated in cells. More recently, the development of RNAi therapeutics represents a promising new class of medicines that can harness the natural biological process of RNAi occurring in our cells to specifically target the genetic precursors that lead to certain diseases.

The lecture is expected to be attended by approximately 150 delegates comprising academic professors from ETH Zurich, the University of Zurich (UZH) and the University's four hospitals.

"I am honored to be asked to speak at this inaugural lecture in partnership with Hochschulmedizin Zurich. RNAi has advanced greatly since its initial discovery and is now widely considered to be one of the most promising and rapidly advancing frontiers in biology and drug development. By academia and industry working together as a scientific community, we can harness the potential of biotechnology to solve some of the greatest medical challenges of our time," said Professor Sharp.

The Innovative Medicine Lecture Series has been jointly founded by Hochschulmedizin Zurich and Alnylam with the aim of maintaining and contributing to the dialogue between academia and the scientific and biotech communities. Each lecture will encourage and foster an appreciation of the roles that basic science, medicine and innovation play in the care of patients with genetic and other diseases.

ETH/UZH representative and moderator of the event, Professor Markus Stoffel, said, "We are delighted that Alnylam are supporting us with this new Innovative Medicine Lecture Series, which provides an opportunity to discuss the challenges, opportunities and processes of innovative drug development. The science of RNAi is a great example since it has not only transformed the life sciences but also represents a completely new approach to drug discovery and development."

### About the Inaugural Lecture

The programme for the inaugural Innovative Medicine Lecture was developed by an independent, scientific steering committee of clinical experts, chaired by Professor Markus Stoffel, MD PhD, Institute of Molecular Health Sciences from ETH & UZH. The delegates will be presented to by Professor Phillip A. Sharp, PhD (Nobel Laureate), the Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Dr Akshay Vaishnav, MD PhD, Head of Research and Development at Alnylam.

Professor Sharp and Dr Vaishnav will discuss the discovery of RNAi and how it is now being applied to support the development of innovative medicines to treat patients with serious, life-threatening rare diseases where there are currently limited or inadequate treatment options.

The inaugural lecture is being held in memory of Dr Alex Leather (1976–2016), to honor and perpetuate his spirit and enthusiasm for science, medicine and innovation.

### About RNAi

RNAi (RNA interference) is a natural cellular process of gene silencing that represents one of the most promising and rapidly advancing frontiers in biology and drug development today. Its discovery has been heralded as "a major scientific breakthrough that happens once every decade or so," and was recognized with the award of the 2006 Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine. By harnessing the natural biological process of RNAi occurring in our cells, a major new class of medicines, known as RNAi therapeutics, is on the horizon. Small interfering RNA (siRNA), the molecules that mediate RNAi and comprise Alnylam's RNAi therapeutic platform, function upstream of today's medicines by potently silencing messenger RNA (mRNA) – the genetic precursors that encode for disease-causing proteins – thus preventing them from being made. This is a revolutionary approach with the potential to transform the care of patients with genetic and other diseases.

### About Hochschulmedizin Zurich (HMZ)

Hochschulmedizin Zurich is a joint platform of the two academic institutions in Zurich, the University of Zurich and ETH Zurich, and the University's four hospitals to promote research and education across institutions at the intersection between basic medical research, life sciences, engineering, clinical research, and medical care. The academic setting in Zurich offers expertise in a wide range of medical disciplines and offers a unique potential for innovative, interdisciplinary, and translational research. Hochschulmedizin Zurich hosts several joint centres as well as the HMZ Flagship Projects that are large interdisciplinary projects with national and international lighthouse character and break-through potential.

### About Alnylam

Alnylam (Nasdaq: ALNY) is leading the translation of RNA interference (RNAi) into a new class of innovative medicines with the potential to improve the lives of people afflicted with rare genetic, cardio-metabolic, hepatic infectious, and central nervous system (CNS) diseases. Based on Nobel Prize-winning science, RNAi therapeutics represent a powerful, clinically validated approach for the treatment of a wide range of severe and debilitating diseases.

View source version on businesswire.com: <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20181029005408/en/>

Source: Alnylam Pharmaceuticals, Inc.

Alnylam Pharmaceuticals, Inc.  
Fiona McMillan, +44 1628 244960  
(Media, Europe)