

# SHEPHERD Therapeutics and Oncoheroes Biosciences to Partner for the Discovery of Oncology Therapeutics For Rare Cancers

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS, UNITED STATES, February 15, 2021

[/EINPresswire.com/](https://www.einpresswire.com/) -- SHEPHERD Therapeutics, a company dedicated to catalyzing lifesaving treatments for rare cancer patients, and Oncoheroes Biosciences, a biotech company focused on advancing new therapies for childhood cancer, today announced they have entered into a partnership to collaborate in the discovery, development and commercialization of innovative drug products for rare oncology indications.



Out of 400 known distinct cancers, 380 are considered rare according to the American Cancer Society's metric of an incidence of less than 6 per 100,000. Rare cancers affect almost one in three new patients, or over half a million Americans each year. Despite the prevalence of rare cancers, 2012-2016 data shows that 75% of all clinical trials did not specifically include even one rare cancer by name.

Childhood cancer is considered a rare disease that accounts for about 1% of all U.S. cancer diagnoses. Every year, cancer takes the lives of 90,000 children and adolescents worldwide, despite treatment advances in recent decades. Although cancer is the leading cause of death by disease among children in the United States, pediatric oncology treatments are lacking: Only five pediatric-specific drugs have been granted U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval in the last 20 years versus more than 200 for adults.

Oncoheroes and SHEPHERD's collaboration advances a paradigm change in drug development for rare cancers. The companies will use DELVE, SHEPHERD's next-generation, precision-oncology platform that integrates bioinformatics, machine learning and mathematics, to unveil unprecedented insights into rare cancers, including childhood cancer. DELVE enables the companies to move beyond a single target-based approach to identify all of the primary

mechanisms of action responsible for drug response and resistance within the human transcriptome.

The companies' first project of the collaboration will identify additional pediatric and rare adult indications for Oncoheroes' lead asset, volasertib. Volasertib is an inhibitor of Polo-like-kinase 1 (PLK1), an enzyme known to be involved in disease progression in a number of cancers. Volasertib has recently been granted Rare Pediatric Disease Designation (RPDD) and Orphan Drug Designation (ODD) by the FDA for the treatment of rhabdomyosarcoma, the most common soft tissue sarcoma in children and young adults, representing 3-4% of all childhood cancers.

"Getting a diagnosis of cancer as a child should not be a death sentence, yet too many lives are being lost or diminished because of a dearth of pediatric cancer research and treatments," said David Hysong, CEO of SHEPHERD. "SHEPHERD and Oncoheroes are coming together in hope and in action, leveraging the full extent of our combined technology, experience and expertise to help save lives."

"We are excited about this partnership between two mission-driven companies determined to address high unmet medical needs in the rare oncology space. We are confident that SHEPHERD's technology, combined with Oncoheroes' expertise in the pediatric oncology space, will deliver new therapeutics options to children and adolescents with cancer," stated Ricardo Garcia, CEO of Oncoheroes.

#### About Oncoheroes Biosciences

Oncoheroes is a ground-breaking biotech company exclusively focused on the discovery and development of better drugs for children and adolescents with cancer. Our vision is to deliver benefits to young cancer patients and create value in the process. The company is headquartered in Boston, US, with a discovery lab in Barcelona, Spain. Oncoheroes is actively looking for in-licensing opportunities in the pediatric oncology space while working to generate new proprietary assets for a number of pediatric cancer indications with high unmet medical needs. For more information please visit: [oncoheroes.com](http://oncoheroes.com)

#### About SHEPHERD

SHEPHERD is on a mission to change the way rare cancer is treated. Through SHEPHERD Therapeutics and the SHEPHERD Foundation, we attack rare cancer from every angle, with the goal of saving millions of lives. SHEPHERD Therapeutics pursues drug development differently than any other company: Using our precision-oncology platform, DELVE, we are moving beyond a single-target-based approach to identify complex and interconnected mechanisms responsible for drug response and resistance revealed in the human transcriptome, which inform the identification of promising potential treatments for specific cancers. The SHEPHERD Foundation is a non-profit fighting to generate industry-wide change related to rare cancer awareness and therapeutic availability. The Foundation drives transformative healthcare policy at the federal level, connects and advocates for rare cancer patients and their families, and ultimately aims to accelerate the availability of and access to rare cancer-related data, basic science and therapies –

to ensure that no patient is left to die. Visit [www.SHEPHERD.bio](http://www.SHEPHERD.bio) to learn more and join the fight.

#### About DELVE

DELVE is SHEPHERD's next-generation, precision-oncology platform that integrates bioinformatics, machine learning and mathematics to unveil unprecedented insights into cancer. DELVE moves beyond a single-target-based approach to identify complex and interconnected mechanisms responsible for drug response and resistance revealed in the human transcriptome. Using DELVE, SHEPHERD can identify the cancers for which each therapy potentially will work best – and the therapies that will work best for each cancer. This approach enables SHEPHERD to work faster and differently across over 100 cancers, multiplying the potential patient impact for any therapy, speeding development, and improving patient outcomes by optimizing for maximum clinical trial success.

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