U.S. DoD Awards Safi Biotherapeutics $3.5 Million in Additional Non-Dilutive Funding to Optimize Cryo-Storage of mRBCs

Safi advancing manufactured human RBC (mRBC) program for acute bleeding and chronic transfusion indications

CAMBRIDGE, MA, UNITED STATES, February 25, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Safi Biotherapeutics, a biotech company producing stem-cell derived, human red blood cell (RBC) products for civilian and military transfusion needs, announced today it has been selected by the U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command (USAMRDC) to receive a $3.5 million award from the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) through the Medical Technology Enterprise Consortium (MTEC) Military Prototype Advancement Initiative (MPAI) for the optimization and standardization of enhanced cryo-storage capabilities unique to manufactured human red blood cells (mRBCs).

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> *Safi COO Kyle Meetze*

"Despite the impressive scale and logistical capabilities of the blood supply system, shortages of donor blood exist in the U.S. and abroad. During these times, there are not enough RBC units to support all medical procedures as well as chronic and acute transfusion needs," said Doug McConnell, Chief Executive Officer and Co-Founder of Safi Biotherapeutics. "Not only can mRBCs help supplement the existing blood supply system during times of high demand or low donor supply, but mRBCs can also be produced with versatile storage and transport capabilities that expand access to blood for both military and civilian use."

With this prototyping award, the company will optimize its cryo-preservation approach, expand its clinical strategy and trial design to include an acute bleeding indication, and refine its FDA IND-enabling pre-clinical studies. This work will be done in collaboration with the University of Colorado's Center for COMBAT Research, Department of Emergency Medicine, and Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics; and Emory University School of Medicine.

"Safi has been awarded over $20 million in total nondilutive funding to date to accelerate the production of mRBCs at industrial scale and viable economics for the transfusion needs of the Warfighter. This DoD award accelerates our ability to provide innovative approaches for improving both military and civilian blood supply," added Kyle Meetze, Chief Operating Officer of Safi Biotherapeutics. "We're grateful to the DoD for its support as we advance our mRBCs towards clinical development for the potential use in acute transfusion settings."

About Safi Biotherapeutics

Safi Biotherapeutics produces stem-cell derived, human RBCs with the goal of providing a highly characterized cell therapy product at industrial scale and viable economics for civilian and military transfusion needs. Safi's manufacturing blueprint for RBC production is the most advanced in the industry, and the company's readily addressable markets include chronic transfusion indications such as sickle-cell disease and acute transfusion settings such as civilian and military hospitals during critical times of need. Safi leadership, comprised of industry and cell therapy veterans from DARPA, Vertex Pharmaceuticals, and Loughborough University in the United Kingdom, launched the company in 2020 as part of the U.S. Department of Defense On-Demand Blood program. For more information on Safi, visit: https://safi.bio/.

About U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command

The U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command is the Army's medical materiel developer, with responsibility for medical research, development, and acquisition. USAMRDC produces medical solutions for the battlefield with a focus on various areas of biomedical research, including military infectious diseases, combat casualty care, military operational medicine, medical chemical and biological defense. https://mrdc.health.mil/.

About MTEC

The Medical Technology Enterprise Consortium is a 501(c)(3) biomedical technology consortium that is internationally-dispersed, collaborating with multiple government agencies under a 10-year renewable Other Transaction Agreement with the U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command. The consortium focuses on the development of medical solutions that protect, treat, and optimize the health and performance of U.S. military personnel.

About University of Colorado Center for COMBAT Research

The University of Colorado Center for COMBAT Research is based at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus in Aurora, Colorado and is driven to solve the U.S. military's toughest medical challenges. The center aims to turn military medical gains into better health care for all. It facilitates the execution of combat and deployment-related medical research by navigating successful relationships with military scientists, clinical investigators, military leaders, and industry to produce successful innovations, material solutions, and high impact knowledge products. https://www.combatresearch.org/.

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