Australian Biotech company launches clinical trials for revolutionary peanut allergy treatment

16 May 2017, Melbourne, Victoria – Australian biotechnology company Aravax has commenced clinical trials of a potentially life-changing product developed to treat sufferers of peanut allergy.

Aravax's technology uses carefully selected fragments of peanut proteins to switch off allergic reactions. The product is designed to be safer, more rapid, and more convenient than other approaches currently under development. Aravax anticipates that simple, monthly injections will be sufficient to achieve clinical benefit.

Pascal Hickey, CEO of Aravax, said, "We want to help people around the world who suffer from peanut allergy to live stress-free lives without constantly fearing a major health event from accidental consumption. Our technology aims to alleviate that stress by reprogramming the immune system to tolerate peanuts. By creating a safe, convenient and fast solution to a very serious problem we believe our product will have a global health impact by transforming the lives of patients and their carers."

Almost two in every hundred Australians suffer from peanut allergy, and currently there is no therapy to reduce the severity of allergic reactions that can occur following accidental consumption. Despite patients attempting to follow a peanut-free diet, every year around 40% of peanut allergic individuals will suffer a serious adverse event from inadvertent exposure, including anaphylaxis which can lead to death.

Traditionally, allergy specialists have treated patients using repeated doses of the allergy-causing substance. Similar approaches are being developed to treat peanut allergy, but the use of preparations containing whole peanut protein carries a high risk of severe reactions and requires daily dosing for lengthy periods. Aravax's product is different because it does not contain the parts of peanut protein that cause severe allergic reactions, and its once-a-month dosing regimen is a far simpler solution than remembering to take medication every day.

In the first ever trial of its product known as PVX108, Aravax will evaluate the safety and tolerability of single and repeated administration across a wide range of doses to determine an appropriate dosing regimen. This double-blinded and placebo controlled trial commenced dosing on 10th May 2017 with the first group of subjects safely receiving the lowest dose of PVX108. The trial is being conducted at CMAX Clinical Research in Adelaide, and at Nucleus Network in Melbourne.

Aravax's technology is underpinned by over a decade of research led by Professor Robyn O'Hehir and her team at Alfred Health and Monash University, which has been supported by the Australian Food Allergy Foundation, the Alfred Hospital Trust, and the National Health and Medical Research Council.

In 2015, Aravax secured over $4.85 million in investment from the Medical Research Commercialisation Fund (MRCF) to develop the technology through to initial clinical trials, with Phase 1 clinical trials commencing last week.

Peanut allergy sufferers interested in participating in the trials are invited to refer to the Aravax website (www.aravax.com.au) for further information.

Ends

Media enquiries:
Aravax & MRCF: Andrew Hamilton +61420 447 669 or ah@manacommunications.com

About the Clinical Trial

The clinical research centers are currently seeking peanut-allergic individuals to participate in the trial. If you are 18-65 years of age and interested in participating, please contact one of the clinical trial centers:

CMAX, Adelaide – 1800 150 433

Nucleus Network, Melbourne – 03 8593 9875

About Aravax

Aravax is a clinical stage biotechnology company focused on developing the first safe and rapidly effective treatment for peanut allergy. The treatment will use new technology that can reset the immune system to tolerate peanut without evoking allergic reactions during treatment.

Aravax's technology is underpinned by over a decade of research led by Professor Robyn O'Hehir and her team at Alfred Health and Monash University, which has been supported by the Australian Food Allergy Foundation, the Alfred Hospital Trust, and the National Health and Medical Research Council.

The novel technology uses carefully selected fragments of peanut proteins to switch off allergic reactions. These fragments do not contain the parts of the nut proteins that cause the life-threatening anaphylactic reactions that can make other proposed peanut allergy therapeutics unsafe.

Aravax is headquartered in Melbourne, Australia.

For more information visit: www.aravax.com.au

About the MRCF

The MRCF collaboration is managed by the venture capital firm Brandon Capital Partners, and provides seed and venture capital investment to support the development and growth of Australian life science companies.

Established in late 2007, the MRCF is a unique collaboration between major Australian superannuation funds, over 50 leading medical research institutes and research hospitals in Australia and New Zealand. The MRCF supports the development and commercialisation of very early-stage biomedical discoveries originating from these member research organisations, providing both capital and expertise to guide the successful development of new therapies. The MRCF acknowledges the support of the Australian and New Zealand governments, as well as the state governments of Victoria, New South Wales, Western Australia, Queensland, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory.

For more information visit: www.mrcf.com.au