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ONCOLOGY

Gritstone Oncology Announces the Appointment of Dr. Vijay Yabannavar, a Biopharma Leader with Over 30 Years of Experience, as Executive Vice President of Manufacturing and Technical Operations

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EMERYVILLE, Calif., July 08, 2019 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Gritstone Oncology, Inc. (Nasdaq: GRTS), a clinical-stage biotechnology company developing the next generation of cancer immunotherapies to fight multiple cancer types, today announced that Vijay Yabannavar, Ph.D., has joined the company as executive vice president of manufacturing and technical operations. Dr. Yabannavar was most recently the vice president of global technical operations at Merck, providing technical support to drive the supply chain growth of its immune checkpoint inhibitor Keytruda (pembrolizumab).

"We are pleased that we continue to attract top talent like Vijay to our senior leadership team," said Andrew Allen, M.D., Ph.D., co-founder, president and chief executive officer of Gritstone Oncology. "Vijay's wide and deep expertise in technical operations, including manufacturing and process development, spans treatment modalities such as vaccines, viral vectors, antibodies, and recombinant proteins, among others. As we ramp up our manufacturing activities to support our clinical trials and continue the build out of our state-of-the-art biomanufacturing facility with progressive internalization of the complete process, Vijay's experience will be invaluable."

Dr. Yabannavar joins Gritstone with more than 30 years of process and product development, manufacturing and project leadership experience. As vice president of global technical operations – vaccines, biologics and sterile operations at Merck from 2015 until June 2019, he supported a large portfolio of products with total revenues of more than \$16 billion per year. Prior to 2015, he was senior vice president of manufacturing & technical development at Emergent BioSolutions, and the site head of Emergent's Baltimore manufacturing facility with a biodefense focus. From 2007 to 2010, Dr. Yabannavar was vice president of process development and manufacturing at Trubion Pharmaceuticals, where he worked on novel molecules, including bispecifics to treat cancer and autoimmune disorders. Prior to that, he was the head of technical research and development for Novartis Pharmaceuticals, responsible for the process, analytical and formulation development groups for biopharmaceuticals and vaccines. Dr. Yabannavar also held similar technical product and process development roles at Chiron Corporation and Schering-Plough Corporation. He obtained his Ph.D. in chemical engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and his B. Tech. in chemical engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology in Bombay.

"The innovation being pursued at Gritstone is truly remarkable," said Vijay M. Yabannavar, Ph.D., executive vice president of manufacturing and technical operations at Gritstone Oncology. "I am excited to be working with an exceptional team on novel products that have the potential to revolutionize the approach to cancer treatment."

About Gritstone Oncology

Gritstone Oncology (Nasdaq: GRTS), a clinical-stage biotechnology company, is developing the next generation of cancer immunotherapies to fight multiple cancer types. Gritstone develops its products by leveraging two key pillars—first, a proprietary machine learning-based platform, Gritstone EDGE™, which is designed to predict, from a routine tumor biopsy, the tumor-specific neoantigens (TSNA) that are presented on a patient's tumor cells; and second, the ability to develop and manufacture potent immunotherapies utilizing patients' TSNA to potentially drive the patient's immune system to specifically attack and destroy tumors. The company's lead product candidate, GRANITE, is a personalized neoantigen-based immunotherapy in Phase 1 clinical testing. Gritstone's second product candidate, SLATE, is a shared neoantigen ("off-the-shelf") immunotherapy which is now entering into a Phase 1 clinical study following IND acceptance. Novel tumor-specific antigens can also provide targets for bispecific antibody (BiSAb) therapeutics for solid tumors, and Gritstone's BiSAb program is currently in lead optimization. For more information, please visit gritstoneoncology.com.

Gritstone Forward-Looking Statements

This press release contains forward-looking statements, including, but not limited to, statements related to its senior leadership team membership and potential growth and success driven by such members. Such forward-looking statements involve substantial risks and uncertainties that could cause Gritstone's research and clinical development programs, future results, performance or achievements to differ significantly from those expressed or implied by the forward-looking statements. Such risks and uncertainties include, among others, the uncertainties inherent in the drug development process, including Gritstone's programs' early stage of development, the process of designing and conducting preclinical and clinical trials, the regulatory approval processes, the timing of regulatory filings, the challenges associated with manufacturing drug products, Gritstone's ability to successfully establish, protect and defend its intellectual property and other matters that could affect the sufficiency of existing cash to fund operations. Gritstone undertakes no obligation to update or revise any forward-looking statements. For a further description of the risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ from those expressed in these forward-looking statements, as well as risks relating to the business of the company in general, see Gritstone's most recent Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q filed on May 13, 2019 and any current and periodic reports filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

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