

TGen licenses first drug for patient use in clinical care

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The Translational Genomics Research Institute (TGen) has licensed its first drug, a unique compound that targets cancer tumors by modifying the actions of proteins.

Today's announcement is another key fulfillment of TGen's primary mission: To move laboratory discoveries more rapidly into therapeutics that can immediately help patients improve their quality of life.

The drug, ONCO-101, is being licensed to Syracuse, N.Y.-based Oncoholdings Inc., a pharmaceutical company focused on the acquisition and development of innovative anti-cancer compounds.

Oncoholdings, in turn, has contracted with a TGen subsidiary, Scottsdale-based TGen Drug Development (TD2), to help guide continued pre-clinical tests, and eventually move ONCO-101 into first-in-human clinical trials, where it could immediately help [cancer patients](#).

"This milestone is a significant accomplishment that validates the clinical groundwork we established when forming TGen," said Dr. Jeffrey Trent, TGen President and Research Director. "Because ONCO-101 could potentially change the way patients with ovarian and [endometrial cancer](#) are treated, we hope this is but the first of many compounds that benefit patients battling life-threatening illnesses."

Licensing ONCO-101 comes nearly nine years after the establishment of TGen, an integral piece of Arizona's bioscience initiative. The goals of

that initiative are to: enable scientific discoveries; improve the quality of health care, especially for Arizona residents; and diversifying the state's knowledge-based economy.

ONCO-101 was developed at TGen in the course of research into the design of drugs that selectively target key proteins involved in cancers.

TGen granted Oncoholdings the exclusive license to further develop ONCO-101, an epigenetic agent, or compound, that decides how active proteins become. Currently, there are only four epigenetic drugs on the market, and they are only approved to treat blood cancers. ONCO-101 would be the first epigenetic agent to attack solid tumors.

"This class of therapeutic agents has yet to find its place in the market for the treatment of solid tumors," according to Jeffrey Evans, Ph.D. and Chief Operating Officer of Oncoholdings. "ONCO-101 works by allowing the regular function of normal cells, while disrupting the ability of abnormal cells to reproduce, effectively stopping the cancer."

Oncoholdings expects to announce the acquisition of its second group of products in the second quarter of 2011.

Provided by The Translational Genomics Research Institute

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