

## News Release

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### **Not intended for U.K. based media**

September 11, 2017

## **Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, Set to Join Forces with Project Data Sphere to Pioneer Global Oncology Big Data Alliance**

- **Big data platform to help accelerate innovative discovery, development and delivery of new approaches in cancer care**
- **Enhanced analytical capabilities to better define personalized treatment options and help predict treatment outcomes**
- **Focused on areas of high unmet need to help enhance advancement in understanding, and empower and connect oncology community**

Darmstadt, Germany, September 11, 2017 - Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, a leading science and technology company has announced that it will enter into a strategic collaboration with Project Data Sphere LLC, an independent, not-for-profit initiative of the *CEO Roundtable on Cancer's Life Sciences Consortium*, to jointly lead the Global Oncology Big Data Alliance (GOBDA). This was announced at the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding yesterday, to coincide with Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany's, Award Ceremony announcing the recipients of its 2017 Grant for Oncology Innovation, held during the annual European Society for Medical Oncology Congress (ESMO 2017) in Madrid, Spain.

"The ultimate goal of our alliance with Project Data Sphere is to unleash the power of big data to bring value to cancer patients," said Belén Garijo, Member of the Executive Board of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, and CEO Healthcare. "Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, is deeply committed to investing in initiatives that push the boundaries of cancer research, that we hope will accelerate the discovery, development and delivery of innovative treatments to all who need it."



The GOBDA initiative has been formed to expand the open-access of de-identified patient data sets to further enhance analytical capabilities, by building on Project Data Sphere's innovative digital platform. The current platform contains historical clinical trial data from almost 100,000 patients provided by multiple organizations, and access to this information has already led to new and potentially practice-changing findings. GOBDA will expand this platform to include rare tumor trial, experimental arm and real-world patient data. Leveraging these data with big data analytics will help to optimize clinical trials, build a registry of data and help to enable advancement in the understanding of cancer treatment globally, with the mission to address the significant unmet needs in this field. In addition, by unleashing analytical power and big data to study and learn how to better manage rare but serious immune-mediated adverse events, institutes and industry will be able to assist regulators to adapt these new learnings into treatment guidelines. As well as establishing models to help enable early adverse event identification and improved patient outcomes.

"Big data is changing the face of healthcare as we know it, and advances in our ability to collect data, share and analyze it has already led to ground-breaking work," said Dr Martin J. Murphy, CEO of Project Data Sphere LLC. "The joint force of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, and Project Data Sphere will aim to connect and empower a truly global oncology community with these big data and analytical capabilities. We are excited about the Global Oncology Big Data Alliance initiative and the continuing engagement of a diverse community focused on finding solutions for cancer patients."

Investment in the initiative builds on Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany's, commitment to rewarding innovation and creative thinking that could further advance the field of medicine, and begins a new chapter for global oncology innovation. Since 2014, the company has awarded a total of €4 million to further research in oncology through the Grant for Oncology Innovation award, which has engaged over 1,000 investigators worldwide, generated 12 winning research proposals from leading academic institutions, and generated seven high impact



manuscripts. More information about the program can be found online at:

<http://www.grantforoncologyinnovation.org>

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#### **About Project Data Sphere, LLC**

[Project Data Sphere, LLC](#) is an independent, not-for-profit initiative of the CEO Roundtable on Cancer Inc.'s Life Sciences Consortium. The [CEO Roundtable on Cancer](#) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation founded by President George H.W. Bush in 2001 to develop and implement initiatives that reduce the risk of cancer, enable early diagnosis, facilitate access to the best available treatments, and hasten the discovery of novel and more effective anti-cancer therapies.

For more information, visit [www.ProjectDataSphere.org](http://www.ProjectDataSphere.org), or follow the *Project Data Sphere* initiative on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/ProjDataSphere>.

#### **About the Global Oncology Big Data Alliance (GOBDA)**

The Global Oncology Big Data Alliance (GOBDA) will be a joint alliance, co-led by Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, and Project Data Sphere with the shared vision to connect and empower the oncology community with big data and advanced analytical capabilities. It is the goal of the initiative that by unleashing these data capabilities, this platform will help accelerate discovery, development and delivery of innovative treatment approaches for cancer patients, and address current significant unmet needs in this field.

A joint steering committee will monitor the initial progress of the collaboration including expansion of the PDS database with new data sets provided by the National Cancer Institute and other parties, designing the first FDA/Industry immuno-related adverse event Safety Meeting on December 15, 2017. The anticipated overall term of the GOBDA project and strategic collaboration shall be from 2018–2021.

#### **About Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany**

Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, is a leading science and technology company in healthcare, life science and performance materials. Around 50,000 employees work to further develop technologies that improve and enhance life – from biopharmaceutical therapies to treat cancer or multiple sclerosis, cutting-edge systems for scientific research and production, to liquid crystals for smartphones and LCD televisions. In 2016, Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, generated sales of € 15.0 billion in 66 countries. Founded in 1668, Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, is the world's oldest pharmaceutical and chemical company. The founding family remains the majority owner of the publicly listed corporate group. Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, holds the global rights to the "Merck" name and brand except in the United States and Canada, where the company operates as EMD Serono, MilliporeSigma and EMD Performance Materials.

