

SemaThera enters into a Research Collaboration and Exclusive License Agreement with Roche

MONTREAL – ([BUSINESS WIRE](#)) – SemaThera Inc. today announced the signing of a multi-year research collaboration and licensing agreement with Roche. The partnership will focus on developing SemaThera's promising new class of biologicals for the treatment of diabetic retinopathy and other ischemic retinal diseases.

"We are very enthusiastic about combining our knowledge of the underlying biology of novel Semaphorin 3A antagonists with Roche's expertise in the development and commercialization of innovative biologicals in ophthalmology. We are therefore excited to work together with Roche to pave the way for novel treatment options that may have the potential to benefit patients that currently have few or no options" said Garth Cumberlidge, Ph.D., CEO of SemaThera. "By supporting blood vessel regrowth into avascular areas of the retina and preventing excessive VEGF production and neovascularization, we aim to provide patients with a potentially disease-modifying treatment for retinal ischemia."

"Discovering and developing novel drugs for the treatment of serious retinal diseases such as diabetic retinopathy is one of our focus areas within ophthalmology", said James Sabry, Global Head, Roche Pharma Partnering. "We are looking forward to working together with SemaThera to explore the full potential of these novel biologics in addressing an area of high unmet medical need."

ABOUT DIABETIC RETINOPATHY

Diabetic retinopathy is an ocular complication of diabetes mellitus. While the pathogenesis is unclear, hallmark features include vaso-obliteration, ischemia, excessive VEGF production, and vascular permeability. These changes result in vision loss. While anti-VEGF injections are the standard of care, not all patients respond to treatment in a similar manner. Improved therapies are therefore needed.

ABOUT SEMATHERA INC

SemaThera (www.semathera.com) is a Montreal-based biotech company focusing on the development of novel therapies for the treatment of several retinopathies, including diabetic macular edema and wet age-related macular degeneration. SemaThera holds exclusive rights to various technologies where Semaphorin 3A is involved in neo-angiogenesis, senescence and neuronal regeneration.

SemaThera was launched in 2016 by early-stage investor AmorChem L.P. following its pre-seed investment in Prof. Prezmyslaw (Mike) Sapieha's laboratory at the Centre Intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux de l'Est-de-l'Île-de-Montréal – Installation Hôpital Maisonneuve Rosemont. Prof. Sapieha is a world leader in the biology of the Semaphorin pathways and AmorChem collaborated closely with him to accelerate the discovery of a drug that would promote retinal blood vessel regrowth in avascular areas while avoiding excessive neovascularization. SemaThera has benefited from the financial support of the fund and of its Japanese partner Senju Pharmaceutical Co., LTD.