

## Sarah Boyce Joins Akcea Therapeutics as President and Member of the Board of Directors

CAMBRIDGE, Mass., April 17, 2018 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Akcea Therapeutics, Inc. (NASDAQ:AKCA), an affiliate of Ionis Pharmaceuticals, Inc., today announced that, following today's close of the transaction licensing Akcea the exclusive, worldwide rights to inotersen and AKCEA-TTR-LRx, Sarah Boyce has joined Akcea as president and a member of the Akcea board of directors. As president, Ms. Boyce will serve on Akcea's executive team and will lead all global commercialization. Akcea is focused on developing and commercializing drugs to treat patients with serious and rare diseases, including inotersen and volanesorsen.

"I am thrilled to welcome Sarah to the Akcea team. She brings substantial leadership expertise to the organization and her patient-centric view of commercial and clinical development is exactly in sync with Akcea's mission and culture," said Paula Soteropoulos, chief executive officer at Akcea Therapeutics. "With Sarah joining Akcea, we further augment our already strong board and management team, as we prepare to launch two globally rare disease medicines this year."

"I am excited to join the Akcea team at this pivotal moment as we prepare to launch both inotersen and volanesorsen this year, if approved. Both drugs have transformative potential and it is an honor to lead the efforts to bring these desperately needed medicines to patients," said Sarah Boyce, president of Akcea Therapeutics. "I look forward to joining Paula and the management team as we embark on this remarkable new phase of global growth and pipeline expansion at Akcea."

Ms. Boyce brings to Akcea extensive, global experience in the life sciences industry where she established organizations from inception around the world and built high performing teams. Ms. Boyce also led the launches of multiple, billion-dollar drugs, including Soliris®, Tasigna®, Glivec® and Herceptin®.

Ms. Boyce most recently served as the chief business officer at Ionis Pharmaceuticals where she was responsible for business development, alliance management, investor relations, corporate communications, competitive intelligence and patient advocacy. Prior to joining Ionis in January 2015, Ms. Boyce held multiple executive level roles at large pharma and biotech companies including Forest Laboratories, Alexion Pharmaceuticals, Novartis Oncology and Roche.

### ABOUT AKCEA THERAPEUTICS

Akcea Therapeutics, an affiliate of Ionis Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (NASDAQ:IONS), is a biopharmaceutical company focused on developing and commercializing drugs to treat patients with serious and rare diseases. Akcea is advancing a mature pipeline of six novel drugs, including inotersen, volanesorsen, AKCEA-APO(a)-LRx, AKCEA-ANGPTL3-LRx, AKCEA-APOCIII-LRx, and AKCEA-TTR-LRx, all with the potential to treat multiple diseases. All six drugs were discovered by and are being co-developed with Ionis, a leader in antisense therapeutics, and are based on Ionis' proprietary antisense technology. Inotersen is under regulatory review in the U.S. and EU for the treatment of hereditary transthyretin amyloidosis (hATTR). Volanesorsen is under regulatory review in the U.S., EU and Canada for the treatment of familial chylomicronemia syndrome, or FCS, and is currently in Phase 3 clinical development for the treatment of familial partial lipodystrophy, or FPL. Akcea is building the infrastructure to commercialize its drugs globally. Akcea is a global company headquartered in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Additional information about Akcea is available at [www.akceatx.com](http://www.akceatx.com).

### AKCEA'S FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENT

This press release includes forward-looking statements regarding the business of Akcea Therapeutics, Inc. and the therapeutic and commercial potential of inotersen, volanesorsen and other products in development. Any statement describing Akcea's goals, expectations, financial or other projections, intentions or beliefs is a forward-looking statement and should be considered an at-risk statement. Such statements are subject to certain risks and uncertainties, particularly those inherent in the process of discovering, developing and commercializing drugs that are safe and effective for use as human therapeutics, and in the endeavor of building a business around such drugs. Akcea's forward-looking statements also involve assumptions that, if they never materialize or prove correct, could cause its results to differ materially from those expressed or implied by such forward-looking statements. Although Akcea's forward-looking statements reflect the good faith judgment of its management, these statements are based only on facts and factors currently known by Akcea. As a result, you are cautioned not to rely on these forward-looking statements. These and other risks concerning Akcea's programs are described in additional detail in its annual report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2017, which is on file with the SEC.

In this press release, unless the context requires otherwise, "Ionis", "Akcea," "Company," "Companies" "we," "our," and "us" refers to Ionis Pharmaceuticals and/or Akcea Therapeutics.

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