Xenon Names Dr. James R. Empfield Senior Vice President, Drug Discovery

February 9, 2016

BURNABY, British Columbia, Feb. 09, 2016 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Xenon Pharmaceuticals Inc. (Nasdaq:XENE), a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company, today announced that Dr. James R. Empfield has been named as Senior Vice President, Drug Discovery, effective immediately. Reporting to Dr. Simon Pimstone, President and Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Empfield will be responsible for leading drug discovery chemistry, manufacturing, and other preclinical activities that support the growth of Xenon's discovery and development pipeline.

Dr. Simon Pimstone, Xenon's President and Chief Executive Officer, commented: "This is another step forward in the evolution of Xenon. As we strive to build world-class capabilities across our company, Dr. Empfield's scientific expertise, broad leadership skills, and medicinal chemistry background represent an excellent fit for Xenon today, and more importantly, as we grow our research and development organization in the future."

Added Dr. Pimstone, "Dr. Empfield comes to us with a strong track record in both biotech and large pharmaceutical settings where he successfully identified and delivered multiple high quality drug candidates into development. At Xenon, Dr. Empfield is well-positioned to contribute to the strategic expansion of our pipeline. We remain focused on advancing a diverse product portfolio through partnered programs that address large therapeutic markets and through our own proprietary product candidates that address rare diseases."

Prior to joining Xenon, Dr. Empfield served as Vice President, Drug Discovery and Chemistry; Co-Head of Research, Boston at Vertex Pharmaceuticals Inc. from 2011 until August 2015. At Vertex, Dr. Empfield was jointly responsible for the oversight of the operations and portfolio of the Boston research organization including the delivery of drug candidates from lead optimization projects into preclinical development. From 2006 to 2011, Dr. Empfield was Director, CNS Chemistry Department at AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals LP and held various other positions at AstraZeneca from 1990 to 2006. Dr. Empfield has a Ph.D. in Chemistry from the University of Pennsylvania, a M.S. in Chemistry from Bucknell University and a B.S. in Chemistry from Lebanon Valley College.

In addition to Dr. Empfield joining the Company on a full-time basis, Dr. Gary Bridger, who currently serves part-time as Executive Vice President, Research and Development, will transition to an advisory role and continue on a consulting basis.

About Xenon Pharmaceuticals Inc.

Xenon is a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company discovering and developing a pipeline of differentiated therapeutics for orphan indications that it intends to commercialize on its own and for larger market indications that the company intends to partner with global pharmaceutical companies. Xenon has built a core enabling discovery platform, referred to as Extreme Genetics®, for the discovery of validated drug targets by studying rare human diseases with extreme traits, including diseases caused by mutations in ion channels, known as channelopathies. Xenon's Extreme Genetics® platform has yielded the first approved gene therapy product in the European Union and a broad development pipeline and multiple pharmaceutical partnerships, including with Teva and Genentech. For more information, please visit www.xenon-pharma.com.

Safe Harbor Statement

This press release contains forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933 and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 and the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995 and Canadian securities laws. These forward-looking statements are not based on historical fact, and include statements regarding our management and prospects, the growth of our research and development organization and product candidate pipeline and the progress and potential of our pipeline and ongoing development programs. These forward-looking statements are based on current assumptions that involve risks, uncertainties and other factors that may cause the actual results, events or developments to be materially different from those expressed or implied by such forward-looking statements. These risks and uncertainties, many of which are beyond our control, include, but are not limited to: clinical trials may not demonstrate safety and efficacy of any of our or our collaborators' product candidates; our Extreme Genetics® discovery platform or ongoing collaborations may not yield additional product candidates; any of our or our collaborators' product candidates may fail in development, may not receive required regulatory approvals, or may be delayed to a point where they are not commercially viable; we may not achieve additional milestones pursuant to our collaboration agreements; the impact of competition; adverse conditions in the general domestic and global economic markets; as well as the other risks identified in our filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission and the securities commissions in British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario. These forward-looking statements speak only as of the date hereof and we assume no obligation to update these forward-looking statements, and readers are cautioned not to place undue reliance on such forward-looking statements.

various jurisdictions.

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