



AAVantgarde Bio appoints Ram Palanki as Chairman of its Board of Directors

MILAN – March 30, 2022 – [AAVantgarde Bio](#), a Milan-based biotechnology start-up that is developing gene therapies for inherited retinal disorders based on Adeno-Associated Viral (AAV) vectors, announced the appointment of Dr. Ram Palanki as Chairman of its Board of Directors.

Dr. Palanki currently serves as Executive Vice President of Commercial Strategy & Operations at REGENXBIO, a leader in AAV gene therapy, and is responsible for the planning, execution and commercialization of its pipeline across the ophthalmology, central nervous system and neuromuscular disease franchises.

AAVantgarde Bio has been supported by [Sofinnova Partners](#), its first institutional investor, since 2021. The company's founder, Professor Alberto Auricchio, is a highly recognized scientist and a pioneer in the field of gene therapy. AAVantgarde Bio's technology builds on existing AAV platforms, which are the main viral vector technology used in gene therapy applications. Existing AAV-based platforms have been limited by capacity, and AAVantgarde Bio is responding to this challenge by enabling delivery of large genes to tissue and cells in vivo. The company is a spin-off of TIGEM, an international research institute based in Naples that is owned and managed by the Telethon Foundation.

Dr. Palanki has nearly 20 years of experience in the development and commercialization of biopharmaceuticals and medical devices. Before joining REGENXBIO, Dr. Palanki was Senior Vice President of Commercial for the Americas at Santen Inc. Previously, he served as the executive team member leading the strategy and operations for pre-launch and global commercialization of a first-in-class biologic at ThromboGenics. Over the span of his career, Dr. Palanki has held roles of increasing responsibility at several small, mid-sized and large companies, including the launch of LUCENTIS® at Genentech. He is an active board member and strategic advisor to multiple biotech companies, technology start-ups and global non-profits in ophthalmology. Dr. Palanki holds a Pharm.D. from Albany College of Pharmacy at Union University, NY, and completed his post doctorate at Rutgers University, NJ, USA.

Paola Pozzi, Partner in the Sofinnova Telethon Strategy and a member of the AAVantgarde Board of Directors, said: "We are thrilled to welcome Ram to AAVantgarde as Chairman of the Board. Ram's experience and knowledge of AAV gene therapy and ophthalmology will provide AAVantgarde with hands-on leadership as it prepares to go to the next stage in its development."

Dr. Palanki said: "I'm delighted to have been chosen to lead the board of such a promising start-up. I really look forward to advancing AAVantgarde's novel AAV platforms designed to enable large gene delivery and improve the lives of thousands of patients worldwide who suffer from blinding inherited retinal disorders such as Usher syndrome and Stargardt disease."

Dr. Auricchio, Ph.D., the founder of AAVantgarde, said: "Ram's experience in biotech is both broad and deep. We are really excited to partner with him to develop our next generation gene therapy



platforms broadening AAV applications to deliver large genes and potentially treat many devastating inherited diseases."

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About AAVantgarde Bio

AAVantgarde Bio is an innovative biotechnology start-up, co-founded by Dr. Alberto Auricchio and born from the research activities carried out at Tigem (Telethon Institute of Genetics and Medicine) in Naples, Italy, and supported by Sofinnova Partners. For more information visit: www.aavantgardebio.com

About Sofinnova Partners

Sofinnova Partners is a leading European venture capital firm in life sciences, specializing in healthcare and sustainability. Based in Paris, London and Milan, the firm brings together a team of professionals from all over the world with strong scientific, medical and business expertise. Sofinnova Partners is a hands-on company builder across the entire value chain of life sciences investments, from seed to later-stage. The firm actively partners with ambitious entrepreneurs as a lead or cornerstone investor to develop transformative innovations that have the potential to positively impact our collective future.

Founded in 1972, Sofinnova Partners is a deeply-established venture capital firm in Europe, with 50 years of experience backing over 500 companies and creating market leaders around the globe. Today, Sofinnova Partners has over €2.5 billion under management. For more information, please visit: www.sofinnovapartners.com

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