

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | February 19, 2018*

## **St. Louis-based Unleash Immuno Oncolytics Attracts \$3 Million Investment from Publicly-traded Japanese Company** *BioGenerator-supported Company to Advance Cancer Therapies*

ST. LOUIS – St. Louis-based startup [Unleash Immuno Oncolytics](#), which has developed viral-based biologics to attack cancerous tumors, has attracted a major investment from publicly-traded Japanese company [Oncolys BioPharma](#).

Unleash is an immunotherapy company that develops genetically-engineered adenoviruses to harness the immune system to fight cancer. While malignant tumors can trick the body's immune system from attacking them, the Unleash viruses trigger the body's immune system into action. By introducing a virus designed specifically to attack cancer, the virus invades the cancer cells, then unleashes the body's ability to recognize and fight those malignant cells, thus killing the virus and killing the cancer.

Oncolys, a publicly-traded company on the Tokyo Stock Exchange that also is developing oncolytic adenoviruses, has invested \$3 million into Unleash to advance its lead patented programs UIO-512 and UIO-702 toward clinical trials. The programs have already shown promising proof-of-concept results in animal models and human explants.

An additional \$330,000 investment from Oncolys also gives it an equity position within Unleash sister company [Precision Virologics](#), which has developed biologically-targeted vaccines for Zika and Chikungunya. Less than a year ago, [Oncolys invested \\$500,000](#) into those programs.

"We are honored to initiate this partnership with the Oncolys team, also leading developers of oncolytic viruses, who assessed tremendous potential in Unleash's technology," Daniel Katzman, Unleash CEO, said. "Oncolys' solid expertise in manufacturing and clinical development of oncolytic viruses is of great value for advancing our virus-based therapies through clinical trials."

Unleash Immuno Oncolytics was founded on the basis of licensing complementary viral-based technologies developed by research groups led by David T. Curiel, MD, PhD, Director of the Biologic Therapeutics Center at Washington University in St. Louis, and Osvaldo Podhajcer, PhD, member of the CONICET, National Council for Scientific and Technological Research of Argentina, and Head of the Laboratory of Molecular and Cellular Therapy at the Fundación Instituto Leloir in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

"This collaboration will allow us to expand our efforts in developing the next generation of oncolytic viruses for the treatment of cancer," Curiel said. "Labeled as promising for many years,

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now oncolytic viruses are in the forefront of cancer research. Unleash is positioned to become a leading player in this new field.”

“I’m proud to see our research project advancing its way towards clinical trials and helping patients in need,” Podhajcer said. “We are amazed by the level of interest it created among world-class organizations.”

[BioGenerator is the lead investor in Unleash](#) and also supported the company with entrepreneur training through its Fundamentals program, non-dilutive grants, intellectual property strategy, independent third-party evaluation, and moving the company from Argentina to St. Louis’ Cortex Innovation Community.

“St. Louis’ innovation economy has to be globally-connected to grow and thrive, so being home to a company from Argentina validated by renowned investors from Japan is another big step forward for our community,” Donn Rubin, President & CEO of BioSTL, said. “With this new investment from Oncolys BioPharma, we’re seeing Unleash take a lead role in developing next-generation immunotherapy and solidifying St. Louis’ reputation as a world-class research hub.”

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### **About Unleash Immuno Oncolytics**

Unleash Immuno Oncolytics is an immuno-oncology company focused on developing novel therapeutics to treat cancer. Unleash’s leading product, UIO- 512, is an oncolytic virus that targets both malignant cells and tumor-associated stroma cells, thereby triggering an enhanced immune response. UIO-512’s replication is driven by a specific fragment of the SPARC gene promoter, which embodies elements responsive to the tumor microenvironment. Unleash also has a novel development, UIO-702, a genetically-modified virus designed to target neoplastic metastatic disease. For more information, please visit [www.unleash.bio](http://www.unleash.bio)

### **About Oncolys BioPharma**

Oncolys BioPharma is a TSE Mothers-listed biopharmaceutical company with focuses on the development of novel biologics for the treatment of cancer and serious infectious diseases. The company’s lead product for the treatment of cancer, Telomelysin® (OBP-301), is based on replication-competent oncolytic virus, and is being tested in Phase I/II clinical trial in Asia and Phase II in the USA, for various solid tumors. A novel cancer diagnostic product, TelomeScan (OBP-401/1101), is expected to be effective in detecting various types of cancer and inflammatory diseases and adopted in several private practices. The company also has a major program OBP-601 (Censavudine) for infectious diseases, for which it completed Phase II clinical trial in the U.S. for HIV/AIDS therapy, supported by BMS. For more information, please visit <http://www.oncolys.com/en/>

### **About BioGenerator**

BioGenerator, the investment arm of BioSTL, produces a sustained pipeline of successful bioscience companies and entrepreneurs in St. Louis by creating, growing and investing in promising new enterprises. Visit [www.BioGenerator.org](http://www.BioGenerator.org) for additional information, and follow us on LinkedIn [linkedin.com/company/BioGenerator](https://www.linkedin.com/company/BioGenerator) and Twitter [@BioGeneratorSTL](https://twitter.com/BioGeneratorSTL).

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