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\$4 Million Animal Health Investment Means More Strides for Treating Diabetic Pets

Werth Family Investment Associates backs Likarda's proprietary Kanslet™ diabetes treatment in dogs and cats.

KANSAS CITY, Kan. – Cutting-edge biotech research laboratory, Likarda, has received \$4,000,000 in Series A funding from Werth Family Investment Associates, bringing the promise of future diabetes treatment options to dogs and cats.

Likarda is the leading regenerative medicine company for companion animals. They have discovered—and are commercializing—a better way to manage diabetes in dogs and cats. Their insulin-producing cell clusters, called the Kanslet™, can be infused into animals with diabetes. The process allows veterinarians to offer a minimally invasive, cost-effective answer to pet owners battling the burden of diabetes in dogs and cats.

With an estimated 1 in 100 dogs and cats contracting diabetes in their lifetime, nearly 1.5 million pets will suffer from diabetes at some point. Currently, the only option for treatment is twice daily insulin injections, placing enormous stress on pets and their owners. Through years of development and working with various partners, Likarda is in the process of bringing islet transplants to dogs. The microencapsulated islets (the insulin-producing cells of the body) are transplanted via injection into the belly of a diabetic dog, removing the need for twice daily insulin injections. The additional resources provided by the investment allows Likarda to scale the project from hundreds of animals to thousands in the treatment of diabetic pets. The clinical research program is being finalized and is expected to launch by the end of 2017.

Likarda has been family funded since the company's founding in 2012. After only one year, Likarda was profitable and has grown organically since. This is a significant achievement in funding for an animal health company located within the KC Animal Health Corridor and the Midwest.

"Partnership with Werth Family Investment Associates brings both funds to advance our product line, and extensive experience in successful pharmaceutical licensing of new products for both human and animal health," says Lisa Stehno-Bittel, Ph.D., Likarda, President & Co-Founder. "Likarda was introduced at the KC Animal Health Investment Forum in 2012, and the KC Animal Health Corridor and its partners have supported us as we've grown. Investment by Werth Family Investment Associates is exciting and transformational for both animal health in the region and the global prospect of cell-based therapies for diabetic pets."

“We are excited about the work Likarda is doing because when it is successful in treating diabetes in dogs, it will be a life-changing experience for the dog and for the dog owners,” stated Peter Werth, President of Werth Family Investment Associates. “We are pleased and excited to be able to help accelerate this fantastic program.”

Likarda is unique because they live at the intersection between human and animal health. In addition to pioneering work in the animal health arena, Likarda is a world-class contract research organization (CRO), supporting start-up companies and science entrepreneurs through large pharmaceutical and nutraceutical companies. Likarda uses a proprietary cell culture system to create three-dimensional cell clusters, or miniaturized organs. This system has applications in markets ranging from drug discovery and development to cell-based transplantation and regenerative medicine. The technology and its ability to scale gives pharmaceutical companies a way to test new drug compounds on human 3D cell clusters, providing a better prediction of how the drugs will work in the body.

About Likarda

Founded in 2012, Likarda LLC is a world-class, cutting-edge biotech research laboratory for science entrepreneurs, pharmaceutical and nutraceutical companies, animal health, and contract research organizations (CRO). We focus on bringing to market disruptive technologies that improve health-care outcomes and lower costs for pets and people alike. www.likarda.com

About Werth Family Investment Associates

Werth Family Investment Associates is an angel investor for startup companies in the pharmaceutical, veterinary, and medical device field. Our group has successfully helped develop a TrkA specific inhibitor for treating pain; a first-line treatment for gastroparesis; a generic company specializing in injectable products; and a veterinarian company specializing in medicines for small companion animals. We are presently funding projects focused on developing cancer treatment drugs; using molecules to treat cardiovascular problems; and developing topical drugs to treat pain. Point-of-care test kits to detect concussions within 15 – 30 minutes of the event, innovative autoinjector technology using compressed gas, and a special imaging of the brain to detect brain damage related to Alzheimer's and CTE are also efforts supported by our funding. All three of these developments, when successfully approved, will be significant medical advances.

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