Charles River Joins EASYGEN Consortium, Supports Development of Bedside CAR-T Manufacturing

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WILMINGTON, Mass.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Aug. 26, 2025-- Charles River Laboratories International, Inc. (NYSE: CRL) has joined the EASYGEN (Easy Workflow Integration for Gene Therapy) Consortium, a European Union (EU)-backed effort to produce CAR-T cell therapies faster, make them more affordable, and increase patient access throughout Europe. The Consortium aims to develop a fully automated, hospital-based platform capable of manufacturing personalized cell therapies within 24 hours.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here: https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20250708161307/en/

In the front row, from left to right: Dr. Sonja Steppan (EASYGEN Principal Investigator, Fresenius SE), Prof. Dr. Michael Hudecek (Fraunhofer IZI), Theresa Kagerbauer (TQ Therapeutics), Dr. Agnes Vosen (HZDR), Christopher Wegener (Kabi), Vaclovas Radvilas (EBMT), Dr. Julia Schüler (Charles River), Dr. Julia Busch-Casler (HZDR), Nicole Spanier-Baro (Fraunhofer IESE), Vivienne Williams (Cellix Limited), Prof. Dr. Bertram Glaß (Helios), Prof. Dr. Ulrike Köhl (Fraunhofer IZI), Rebecca Scheiwe (Fresenius SE). In the back row, from left to right: Prof. Dr. Ralf Kuhlen (Fresenius SE), Prof. Dr. Jens O. Brunner (DTU), Dominik Narres (Fresenius SE), Thomas Brzoska (Pro-Liance Global Solutions), Dr. David Krones (Fraunhofer IZI), Dr. Sabine Bertsch (Pro-Liance Global Solutions), Dr. Ralf Hoffmann (Philips), Christin Zündorf (TQ Therapeutics), Dr. Anna Dünkel (Fraunhofer IZI). © Johannes Krzeslack

Charles River will leverage its deep institutional expertise in 3D screening technologies to develop an *ex vivo* platform to expedite early screening for safety and efficacy. By leveraging access to Charles River's well-annotated patient-derived xenograft (PDX) bank in combination with high-content imaging read-outs, the new 3D screening platform will enable the rapid identification of the safest and most efficacious CAR-T cell candidate for subsequent development.

"In the treatment of complex cancers, time is critical," said Julia Schueler, DVM, PhD, Therapeutic Area Lead, Oncology, Charles River. "The current manufacturing process for CAR-T therapies is time-intensive and severely limits their clinical application. By collaborating across industry and academia, I am hopeful we can design a streamlined workflow that will increase access to these therapies for patients who need them."

CAR-T cell therapy represents a breakthrough in cancer treatment, yet fewer than 20 percent of eligible patients currently receive it. These therapies typically involve genetically modifying a patient's T cell to target cancer, requiring complex, time-intensive production in specialized facilities often far from patients. Limited manufacturing capacity and supply chain delays prevent timely patient access.

"EASYGEN unites physicians, researchers, and partner institutions across Europe to collaboratively deliver innovative, personalized therapies more swiftly to where they matter most—to patients in need," said Dr.Sonja Steppan, Head of Research Office, Fresenius SE and Principal Investigator, EASYGEN. "Automating patient-specific therapies such as CAR-T is essential to make these treatments more broadly accessible, especially in non-academic clinical environments."

The EU's Innovative Health Initiative's (IHI) Call 7, Topic 2, introduced in 2024, focuses on the development of user-centered technologies to relieve hospital staff and broaden access to advanced treatments. The EASYGEN Consortium aims to meet this goal by enabling rapid, in-hospital CAR-T cell production in days rather than weeks, accelerating patient access, reducing workloads, and lowering costs. A collaboration between 18 academic, research, industry and clinic partners across eight countries, EASYGEN brings together leading expertise across a wide variety of disciplines.

About EASYGEN
EASYGEN is a five-year research project supported by the Innovative Health Initiative Joint Undertaking (IHI JU) under grant agreement No 101194710. The JU receives support from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme and COCIR, EFPIA, Europa Bío, MedTech Europe, Vaccines Europe and industry partners. Selected under the IHI call "User-centric technologies and optimized hospital workflows for a sustainable healthcare workforce", the project aims to develop an integrated, automated platform that enables point-of-care CAR-T cell manufacturing—cutting production time, reducing costs, and expanding access to next-generation immunotherapies.

About Charles River
Charles River provides essential products and services to help pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies, government agencies, and leading academic institutions around the globe accelerate their research and drug development efforts. Our dedicated employees are focused on providing clients with exactly what they need to improve and expedite the discovery, early-stage development, and safe manufacture of new therapies for the patients who need them. To learn more about our unique portfolio and breadth of services, visit www.criver.com.

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