Vertex Announces Partnership with Basketball Hall-of-Famer Alonzo Mourning to Raise Awareness of APOL1-Mediated Kidney Disease (AMKD)

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BOSTON--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Nov. 4, 2022-- Vertex Pharmaceuticals Incorporated (Nasdaq: VRTX) today announced that the company has partnered with basketball Hall-of-Famer Alonzo Mourning to launch “Power Forward” (www.PowerForwardTogether.com), an educational initiative aimed at raising awareness of APOL1-mediated kidney disease (AMKD), highlighting the importance of early diagnosis and genetic testing.

Alonzo Mourning is best known for his legendary basketball career in the 1990s and early 2000s. Among his many achievements are National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) records at Georgetown, seven NBA All-Star recognitions, an NBA championship, an Olympic gold medal, and Hall-of-Fame inductions. At the height of his career, Mr. Mourning’s physicians noticed signs of kidney disease during a routine physical and conducted follow-up tests to confirm his diagnosis: a rare kidney disease now known as a form of AMKD. In 2003, he received a kidney transplant and resumed playing professional basketball, leading the Miami Heat to an NBA championship in 2006 before retiring in 2008. Years later, he learned that his disease was genetically driven. Mr. Mourning is now an advocate for kidney health and encourages others to be proactive as well.

“I was on top of the basketball world when I first noticed symptoms of kidney disease, and the truth is if it weren’t for my pre-season physical, I probably would have continued to ignore them,” said Mr. Mourning. “Many people living with AMKD might not even know that they have this disease and may not be aware that it’s an inherited form of kidney disease, which is why we all need to be active participants in our health. This means knowing your family history of kidney disease, your risk of developing AMKD, and seeing your physician for regular checkups and possible testing. My hope is that Power Forward will serve as an inspiration for others to learn about kidney disease and take charge of their health — because when it comes to kidney disease, an early diagnosis and genetic testing are key.”

“We are proud to partner with Alonzo Mourning to raise awareness of AMKD within communities in the U.S.,” said Carmen Bozic, M.D., Executive Vice President, Global Medicines Development and Medical Affairs, and Chief Medical Officer, Vertex. “Our teams are working tirelessly to advance a potential treatment for AMKD. At the same time, we recognize the immense need for greater disease awareness, education, and genetic testing resources within the kidney health community. We hope this partnership will empower others to be proactive about kidney health, and we’re excited to team up with Alonzo to work toward this goal.”

Power Forward includes a toolkit of educational and actionable content for people who may be at risk for AMKD. This includes a discussion guide that can be used at doctors’ appointments, information on how to get tested if you are at risk for AMKD, and other educational resources. In addition to the Power Forward website, the campaign can be found on social media across Facebook (@PowerForwardTogether), Instagram (@PowerForwardTogether), and Twitter (@Power Forward). Visit PowerForwardTogether.com to learn more.

About AMKD

APOL1-mediated kidney disease is a form of chronic kidney disease associated with having two risk variants of the *APOL1* gene and is estimated to affect 100,000 people in the U.S. and Europe. People who inherit two risk variants in the *APOL1* gene have an increased risk of developing kidney disease and have a course of kidney disease that is far more aggressive than in the absence of the risk variants. Progressive kidney disease may result in death or the need for dialysis or kidney transplant.

APOL1 risk variants are found in people of sub-Saharan African ancestry because they provide protection against human African trypanosomiasis — a parasitic disease endemic in parts of sub-Saharan Africa. In the U.S., an estimated 13% of all African Americans have two *APOL1* risk variants and face a higher risk of developing kidney disease. *APOL1* risk variants explain some of the disproportionate burden of kidney disease experienced by African Americans. Studies show that 23% of African Americans with hypertension-associated kidney disease and 54-73% of African Americans with focal segmental glomerulosclerosis (FSGS) have two *APOL1* risk variants. Their disease is genetically driven: they have AMKD.

AMKD is characterized by its rapid progression and like many forms of kidney disease, it lacks symptoms that are visible to the patient until the disease is advanced. Diagnosis depends on a urine test to detect proteinuria, and blood tests to detect reduced kidney function and the two *APOL1* risk variants.

About Vertex

Vertex is a global biotechnology company that invests in scientific innovation to create transformative medicines for people with

serious diseases. The company has multiple approved medicines that treat the underlying cause of cystic fibrosis (CF) — a rare, life-threatening genetic disease — and has several ongoing clinical and research programs in CF. Beyond CF,Vertex has a robust pipeline of investigational small molecule, cell and genetic therapies in other serious diseases where it has deep insight into causal human biology, including sickle cell disease, beta thalassemia, APOL1-mediated kidney disease, pain, type 1 diabetes, alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency, and Duchenne muscular dystrophy.

Founded in 1989 in Cambridge, Mass., Vertex's global headquarters is now located in Boston's Innovation District and its international headquarters is in London. Additionally, the company has research and development sites and commercial offices in North America, Europe, Australia and Latin America. Vertex is consistently recognized as one of the industry's top places to work, including 13 consecutive years on Science magazine's Top Employers list and one of Fortune's Best Workplaces in Biotechnology and Pharmaceuticals and Best Workplaces for Women. For company updates and to learn more about Vertex's history of innovation, visit www.vrtx.com or follow us on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Instagram.

Special Note Regarding Forward-Looking Statements

This press release contains forward-looking statements as defined in the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995, as amended, including, without limitation, statements by Dr. Carmen Bozic in this press release, and statements regarding our pipeline and expectations for Power Forward. While Vertex believes the forward-looking statements contained in this press release are accurate, these forward-looking statements represent the company's beliefs only as of the date of this press release and there are a number of risks and uncertainties that could cause actual events or results to differ materially from those expressed or implied by such forward-looking statements. Those risks and uncertainties include the risks listed under the heading "Risk Factors" in Vertex's most recent annual report filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and available through the company's website at www.vrtx.com and on the SEC's website at www.sec.gov. You should not place undue reliance on these statements. Vertex disclaims any obligation to update the information contained in this press release as new information becomes available.

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