



12-20-2022

For Immediate Release

### **Stem Pharm Joins Merck Digital Sciences Studio Accelerator Program To Drive Innovations In Neurological Drug Discovery**

Stem Pharm, Inc. announced today that the company has joined the first biopharmaceutical cohort of Merck Digital Sciences Studio (“MDSS”). MDSS is a collaboration between Merck, Microsoft for Startups, and the New Jersey Innovation Institute, a New Jersey Institute of Technology subsidiary, with direct investments from Merck Global Health Innovation Fund, Northpond Ventures, and McKesson Ventures. This 10-month startup accelerator program is designed to enable the generation of innovative technologies for drug discovery and development. Cohort companies will have opportunities to pilot novel life sciences technologies in collaboration with discovery and clinical scientists at Merck.

“Participation in MDSS provides Stem Pharm with a fantastic opportunity to collaborate and network with Merck scientists that are experts in neuroscience, neurological drug discovery, genomics, and machine learning applications,” said Steven Visuri, CEO of Stem Pharm. “Stem Pharm’s 3D human neural organoid platform is an ideal fit for the MDSS program – an innovative technology that will enable discovery and validation of new drug candidates to treat debilitating neurological diseases.”

Stem Pharm’s innovative 3D human neural organoids feature microglia, the brain’s resident immune cells, making them particularly suited to study diseases and disorders associated with neuroinflammation, such as neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer’s disease, brain cancers, and stroke. These diseases have limited options for therapeutic interventions and are associated with some of the lowest new drug approval rates. Stem Pharm is working to change the paradigm for these diseases by enabling the use of physiologically relevant human biology in early drug discovery to explore disease pathways and mechanisms and identify and validate novel targets. “We have demonstrated that our ‘brain models’ strongly correlate with human in vivo responses and can model features of human neurodegeneration not observed in rodent models,” said Visuri.

For more information about the first MDSS cohort, the [MDSS First Cohort Announcement](#).

For more information about MDSS, visit [www.mds.studio](http://www.mds.studio).

#### About Stem Pharm

Stem Pharm, Inc. improves the clinical translation of neurologic drug development by providing physiologically relevant *in vitro* human models of complex neurologic diseases to biopharmaceutical companies for use in drug discovery and preclinical development. Based in Madison, WI, a hub for innovative stem cell and biosciences research, Stem Pharm leverages its proprietary synthetic biomaterials to develop physiologically relevant, 3D human stem cell derived neural organoids. Stem Pharm partners with biopharmaceutical companies to apply these organoids for the discovery and validation of new disease targets and therapeutics. For more information, visit [stempharm.com](http://stempharm.com).

#### Media and Investors:

Ryan Gordon, Ph.D.

[ryan.gordon@stempharm.com](mailto:ryan.gordon@stempharm.com)

612.930.2567

SOURCE Stem Pharm, Inc.

Mailing Address: Stem Pharm, Inc. 2935 S Fish Hatchery Road PMB #235 Madison, WI 53711

Laboratory Location: Stem Pharm, Inc. 5520 Nobel Drive, Suite 100 Madison, WI 53711