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Prothena Announces Appointment of Wagner Zago, PhD as Chief Scientific Officer

DUBLIN, Ireland, June 12, 2017 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Prothena Corporation plc (NASDAQ:PRTA), a late-stage clinical biotechnology company focused on the discovery, development and commercialization of novel protein immunotherapies, announced today the appointment of Wagner Zago, PhD, as Chief Scientific Officer (CSO). Dr. Zago, who has been Prothena's Head of Research since 2015, will have responsibility for defining and executing the company's research strategy and advancing the company's drug discovery pipeline.

"Wagner is a prolific and talented scientist whose expertise has been central to Prothena's ability to build a diverse pipeline of internally discovered first-in-class therapies," stated Gene Kinney, PhD, President and Chief Executive Officer of Prothena. "His appointment to the position of CSO reflects our deeply held commitment to our scientific roots and the continued discovery of novel therapies based on our expertise in protein misfolding and cell adhesion. Beyond his exceptional and widely respected scientific talent, Wagner brings tremendous leadership and strategic planning capabilities to our management team that will advance our capacity to develop innovative medicines."

Dr. Zago joined Prothena in 2012 when the company was founded after spinning out of Elan Pharmaceuticals, first as Head of Pharmacology and Neuropathology and more recently as Vice President, Head of Research. During his tenure at Prothena, he has led teams that have built a strong discovery pipeline and advanced four programs based on novel mechanisms through discovery and preclinical development into the clinic. Dr. Zago holds several key patents and has published broadly in the areas of protein immunotherapy and central nervous system (CNS) disorders. Before Prothena, he was Principal Scientist at Elan Pharmaceuticals performing research aimed at developing new therapeutics for CNS disorders, including beta amyloid-targeted therapies and supportive research for the development of natalizumab, which was commercialized by Biogen for relapsing multiple sclerosis. While in this position he also served as a Scientist at Janssen Alzheimer Immunotherapy, where he made significant discoveries about vascular changes associated with anti-beta amyloid immunotherapy. Previously, he was a Postdoctoral Researcher at the University of California — San Diego and the Burnham Institute. Dr. Zago received his PhD in Pharmacology at the Universidade de Sao Paulo, Brazil.

About Prothena

Prothena Corporation plc is a global, late-stage clinical biotechnology company establishing fully-integrated research, development and commercial capabilities. Fueled by its deep scientific understanding built over decades of research in protein misfolding and cell adhesion — the root causes of many serious or currently untreatable amyloid and inflammatory diseases — Prothena seeks to fundamentally change the course of progressive diseases associated with this biology. The Company's pipeline of antibody therapeutic candidates targets a number of indications including AL amyloidosis (NEOD001), Parkinson's disease and other related synucleinopathies (PRX002/RG7935), inflammatory diseases, including psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis (PRX003), and ATTR amyloidosis (PRX004). The Company continues discovery of additional novel therapeutic candidates where its deep scientific understanding of disease pathology can be leveraged. For more information, please visit the Company's website at www.prothena.com

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