

# UChicago and Evelo Therapeutics Partner to Advance Microbiome-Based Cancer Immunotherapy

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*Agreement to collaborate on development of microbiome-based cancer therapies to boost patients' immune systems*

Cambridge, Mass., November 9, 2015/PRNewswire/ – A partnership between [Evelo Therapeutics](#) and the [University of Chicago](#) will advance an immunotherapy that employs certain gut microbes to boost the immune system's attack on cancer cells and improve the effectiveness of anti-cancer drugs.

A new study, published in the [Nov. 5 issue of Science](#), University of Chicago researcher Thomas Gajewski showed that certain species of bacteria added to the digestive tracts of mice increased the ability of the animals' immune systems to attack tumor cells and, when combined with anti-PD-L1, an investigational anti-cancer antibody in the drug class known as checkpoint inhibitors, nearly eradicated tumors.

An exclusive agreement between the University of Chicago and Evelo provides the company with the option to acquire worldwide rights to the microbiome-based immunotherapy developed by Gajewski, who is a professor of medicine and pathology at UChicago.

The immunotherapy adds to Evelo's research into the power of the microbiome to disrupt and fight cancer. Flagship Ventures, a leader in life sciences innovation and venture creation, last week [launched Evelo](#) with an initial funding commitment of \$35 million.

"Our partnership with Professor Gajewski and UChicago advances Evelo's platform to leverage the ability of bacteria to activate the immune system to drive tumors into remission," said Simba Gill, Ph.D., chief executive officer for Evelo. "We are privileged to be working with Professor Gajewski to translate his pre-clinical work to the clinical setting and bring these therapies to patients as quickly as possible."

Evelo's platform, Oncobiotic™ therapeutics, is a new modality in cancer therapy based on the cancer microbiome. Products developed through this platform are designed to disrupt the tumor microenvironment.

"Through our partnership with Evelo Therapeutics, we can harness the company's expertise to commercialize components of the microbiome and provide Dr. Gajewski with the opportunity to take his research from the bench to the bedside," said Thelma Tennant, assistant director at [UChicagoTech](#), the Center for Technology Development and Ventures, the organization which negotiated the agreement for UChicago.

Many important steps remain to understand how this technology will translate in the setting of cancer treatment in humans. Evelo, Gajewski and UChicago will work together to bring this technology to the patient setting as quickly as possible, while continuing to explore the mechanisms of the microbiome in cancer.

"I am pleased to work with the team at Evelo to further develop this therapeutic approach and take it to clinical trials. With Evelo we can drive this program forward quickly for the ultimate benefit of patients," Gajewski said.

Gajewski will also serve on the Scientific Advisory Board at Evelo. In this capacity, Gajewski will work closely with Evelo as it commercializes microbiome-based cancer immunotherapy and develops new Oncobiotic™ therapies based on a deep understanding of the interaction between the microbiome, the immune system and cancer.

## About Thomas Gajewski

Thomas Gajewski, M.D., Ph.D. is leader of the immunology program at the University of Chicago Cancer Center, and director of Melanoma Oncology. He has been involved in numerous NIH grant review panels, has been on editorial boards for the *Journal of Immunology*, *Cancer Research*, and *Clinical Cancer Research*, has served on the program committees for AACR and ASCO, and is past president of the Society for Immunotherapy of Cancer. Dr. Gajewski has received the Burroughs Wellcome Fund Clinical Scientist Award for Translational research, and been inducted into the American Society for Clinical Investigation and the Henry Kunkel Society. Dr. Gajewski has a joint appointment in pathology and hematology/oncology at the University of Chicago.

## About Evelo Therapeutics

Evelo Therapeutics is dedicated to transforming cancer therapy through a deep understanding of the cancer microbiome. Evelo is discovering and developing Oncobiotic™ therapies, novel treatments designed to attack cancer by disrupting the microbial environment that supports tumors and protects them from the body's immune system. Evelo's platform disrupts the tumor microenvironment at the metabolic and stromal levels and provides next-generation, microbiome-based immunotherapeutics. Founded at Flagship VentureLabs, Evelo is the first microbiome company focused on cancer. For more information, please visit [www.evelotx.com](http://www.evelotx.com).

## About the University of Chicago

As one of the world's premier research universities, the University of Chicago empowers students and scholars through its commitment to free and open inquiry. Across numerous departments and disciplines, as well as more than 140 institutes and centers, the UChicago community advances ideas and innovations that enrich human life. UChicago's faculty are some of the top in the world. The University of Chicago has 89 Nobel Prize winners, including 6 current faculty, and receives more than \$450 million in sponsored research awards each year. Please visit: <http://www.uchicago.edu/>

The agreement between Evelo and UChicago was facilitated by [UChicagoTech](#), the University's Center for Technology Development & Ventures.

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