



Connect Biopharma Teams with Ickey Woods and the Jovante Woods Foundation to Expand Asthma Education Program Nationwide

August 14, 2025

Company and Former Cincinnati Bengals Running Back Known for the "Ickey Shuffle" Collaborate to Raise Awareness and Drive Asthma Education with Focus on Acute Attacks

SAN DIEGO and CINCINNATI, Aug. 14, 2025 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Connect Biopharma Holdings Limited (Nasdaq: CNTB) (Connect Biopharma, Connect, or the Company) and the [Jovante Woods Foundation](#) (the Foundation) today kicked off a collaboration to expand the Foundation's asthma education program across the U.S. On this day in 2010, former Cincinnati Bengals running back Elbert "Ickey" Woods lost his 16-year-old son, Jovante, to an acute asthma attack he suffered on his way home from high school football practice.

Ickey and Chandra Woods established the Foundation to raise awareness of the need for new treatments and to educate families dealing with asthma about overall treatment management. Since its launch, the Foundation has hosted town-hall style educational events and fundraisers at schools, community centers and other venues in Ohio; California, near Ickey's former home city of Fresno; and Nevada, where Ickey was a student-athlete at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Members of Ickey's extensive network of professional sports, entertainment and business leaders, including his former Bengals teammates, have supported the Foundation through their active participation along with corporate sponsors and donors.

As part of the kick-off, Connect and the Foundation have produced a video package to share Jovante's story, inform the public about the dangers of acute asthma attacks, and communicate the importance of the development of novel treatments for asthmatic patients. The video story reunites Ickey with Solomon Wilcotts, a close friend and Bengals teammate who helped the Woods family as they brought together members of Cincinnati's close-knit business and medical communities, to launch the Foundation. Connect and the Foundation will feature the video as part of an expanded schedule of community events that includes new U.S. markets throughout the 2025 NFL season, along with a social media campaign.

"When we met Ickey through mutual friends, our Connect leadership team knew immediately that we wanted to help," said Barry Quart, Pharm.D., Chief Executive Officer and Director of Connect Biopharma. "Enabling families to properly understand asthma, its risks, and the nuances of the treatment journey, is critical to preventing what is preventable: asthma deaths. Significant resources have been allocated toward the development of improved treatments for chronic asthma. Yet, 15 years since Jovante's death, not enough is being done to specifically address acute asthma exacerbations. We are determined to change this, and Connect looks forward to collaborating with the Foundation to increase its reach nationwide. This focus on education is aligned with our own work in developing a new treatment for acute asthma exacerbations. We are currently advancing our Phase 2 Seabreeze STAT studies toward an anticipated topline data read-out in the first half of next year."

More than one million people visit a hospital emergency department each year because of an acute exacerbation with up to 30% of these individuals hospitalized for two to three days. Additionally, in the four-week period following an acute attack, approximately 50% of individuals will experience either a worsening of the initial attack or another exacerbation that requires medical intervention such as a return visit to an emergency department or urgent care clinic. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 3,500 people in the U.S. die from asthma each year.¹

"Asthma has been in our family for as long as I can remember," said Ickey, who is the Foundation's chairman. "But the day I will never forget is August 14, 2010, when I learned that asthma, particularly acute attacks and their complications, can kill. Jovante was a shining, always positive family member who excelled at school and at sports. When Chandra and I began to process what happened, we knew that more needed to be done to help other families understand the severity of asthma and prevent another tragedy. Connect Biopharma has a big heart and mission. I am fortunate to have learned of the Company's dedication to developing a new medicine to treat acute asthma exacerbations, an area where little work has been done. In partnership with Connect, we can increase the frequency of our educational programming and expand its reach beyond Cincinnati and the cities where we have strong networks."

Drafted by the Bengals in the second round of the 1988 NFL Draft, Ickey quickly made his mark in professional football. During his rookie season, he rushed for 1,066 yards and 15 touchdowns, helping lead the Bengals to Super Bowl XXIII. He became internationally known for his celebratory touchdown dance, the "Ickey Shuffle," which remains a cultural phenomenon and has led Ickey to star in television commercials. Originally from Fresno, California, Ickey remains a resident of Cincinnati, where he is active in the Jovante Woods Foundation and other community activities alongside his family and former teammates.

For more information about the Jovante Woods Foundation and upcoming events, visit <https://jovante-woods-foundation.lovable.app/>. Follow the Foundation on social media channels: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [X](#).

About Rademikibart

Rademikibart is a fully human monoclonal antibody targeting interleukin-4 receptor alpha (IL-4Rα), a common subunit of interleukin-4 receptor (IL-4) and interleukin-13 receptor (IL-13). We believe that by binding with IL-4Rα, rademikibart can block the functions of IL-4 and IL-13 effectively, thereby blocking the T helper 2 (Th2) inflammatory pathway to achieving the goal of treating Th2 related inflammatory diseases such as atopic dermatitis and asthma.

Ickey & Jovante Woods



Ickey Woods with his son Jovante.

About Connect Biopharma

Connect Biopharma is a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company dedicated to transforming care for asthma and COPD. Headquartered in San Diego, California, the Company is advancing rademikibart, a next-generation, potentially best-in-class antibody designed to target IL-4Rα. The Company is currently conducting global clinical studies of rademikibart for the treatment of acute exacerbations of asthma and COPD, areas with significant unmet need. Connect also has an exclusive license and collaboration agreement for rademikibart with Simcere in China.

For more information visit www.connectbiopharm.com.

Forward-Looking Statements

This press release contains “forward-looking statements” within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995, as amended (the “Act”). Forward-looking statements are statements that are not of historical fact and include, without limitation, statements regarding future events, our future financial condition, results of operations, business strategy and plans, prospective products (as well as their potential to achieve a differentiated, competitive, or favorable benefit or profile or trend, including on safety, tolerability, improvement, maintenance, clinical response, dosing, efficacy and/or convenience), planned or expected product approval applications or approvals, anticipated milestones, expected data readouts and enrollments, research and development plans and costs, potential future partnerships, expectations about existing partnerships, timing and likelihood of success, objectives of management for future operations, future results of anticipated product development efforts, adequacy of existing cash and potential partnership funding to fund operations and capital expenditure requirements, anticipated patient populations or market opportunities for our prospective products, if approved, as well as statements regarding industry trends. These statements are based on management's current expectations of future events only as of the date of this press release and are inherently subject to a number of risks, uncertainties and assumptions, some of which cannot be predicted or quantified and some of which are beyond our control, including, among other things: the ability of our clinical trials to demonstrate safety and efficacy of our product candidates and other positive results; whether we will need expanded or additional trials in order to obtain regulatory approval for our product candidates; our ability to obtain and maintain regulatory approval of our product candidates; existing regulations and regulatory developments in the U.S., the PRC, Europe and other jurisdictions; the ability of our current cash and investments position to support planned operations; our plans and ability to obtain, maintain, protect and enforce our intellectual property rights and our proprietary technologies, including extensions of existing patent terms where available; our continued reliance on third parties to conduct additional clinical trials of our product candidates, and for the manufacture of our product candidates for preclinical studies and clinical trials; and the degree of market acceptance of our product candidates, if approved, by physicians, patients, healthcare payors and others in the medical community.

Words such as “aim,” “anticipate,” “believe,” “could,” “expect,” “feel,” “goal,” “intend,” “may,” “optimistic,” “plan,” “potential,” “promising,” “will,” and similar expressions are intended to identify forward-looking statements, though not all forward-looking statements necessarily contain these identifying words. The inclusion of forward-looking statements should not be regarded as a representation by Connect Biopharma that any of its expectations, projections or plans will be achieved. Actual results may differ materially due to the risks and uncertainties inherent in our business and other risks described in our filings with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (the “SEC”). Further information regarding these and other risks is included under the heading “Risk Factors” in our annual and periodic reports filed with the SEC. These forward-looking statements should not be taken as forecasts or promises nor should they be taken as implying any indication, assurance or guarantee that the assumptions on which such forward-looking statements have been made are correct or exhaustive or, in the case of the assumptions, fully stated in this presentation. Drug development and commercialization involve a high degree of risk, and only a small number of research and development programs result in commercialization of a product. Results in early-stage clinical trials may not be indicative of full results or results from later stage or larger scale clinical trials and do not ensure regulatory approval. You are cautioned not to place undue reliance on the scientific data presented or these forward-looking statements, which speak only as of the date of this presentation. Except as required by law, Connect Biopharma undertakes no obligation to publicly update any forward-looking statements, whether because of new information, future events or otherwise. Connect Biopharma claims the protection of the safe harbor for forward-looking statements contained in the Act for all forward-looking statements.

This press release discusses our product candidate, rademikibart, which is under clinical study and has not yet been approved for marketing by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the National Medical Products Administration, or by any other regulatory agency. No representation is made as to the safety or effectiveness of rademikibart for the uses for which it is being studied. The trademarks included herein are the property of the owners thereof and are used for reference purposes only.

Investor Relations Contact:

Alex Lobo
Precision AQ
Alex.lobo@precisionaq.com
(212) 698-8802

Media Contact:

Ignacio Guerrero-Ros, Ph.D., or David Schull
Russo Partners, LLC
ignacio.guerrero-ros@russopartnersllc.com
David.schull@russopartnersllc.com
(858) 717-2310 or (646) 942-5604

1. *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. (2024, June 4). Asthma – Chronic Disease Indicators. Retrieved August 7, 2025, from <https://www.cdc.gov/cdi/indicator-definitions/asthma.html>

A photo accompanying this announcement is available at <https://www.globenewswire.com/NewsRoom/AttachmentNg/633a13c3-95f1-4e53-9444-c7f01af72934>