Adagene Appoints Immuno-Oncology Pioneer, Axel Hoos, M.D., Ph.D., as Executive Advisor

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SAN DIEGO and SUZHOU, China, Sept. 03, 2025 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Adagene Inc. (“Adagene”) (Nasdaq: ADAG), a company transforming the discovery and development of antibody-based therapies, today announced the appointment of Dr. Axel Hoos as Executive Advisor.

“Adagene is advancing the field of Immuno-Oncology with its pipeline of innovative antibodies centered around CTLA-4, a master-regulator of T-cell responses. This includes ADG116 to differentially engage CTLA-4 for greater T-reg depletion, and ADG126 to mask the CTLA-4 binder (ADG116) until it reaches the tumor microenvironment aiming for an enhanced efficacy and reduced toxicity profile. The design of these antibodies may allow a broader utility of CTLA-4 targeting in cancer immunotherapy” said Dr. Hoos. “CTLA-4 is a proven but notoriously difficult target. Most next-generation programs have not been able to overcome the narrow therapeutic window thus requiring novel designs. With Adagene’s programs the benefit/risk ratio of CTLA-4 targeting may favorably shift and allow treatment of new populations such as cold tumors like MSS CRC, where current immunotherapies have little to no effect.”

“Dr. Hoos is an icon in immuno-oncology—both as the creator of the term and a driving force behind the clinical development of YERVOY® (Ipilimumab), the first FDA-approved immune checkpoint inhibitor,” said Peter Luo, CEO of Adagene. “We’re honored to welcome him to our outstanding team of Executive Advisors. His leadership comes at a pivotal moment, as we advance ADG126 through a key turning point in clinical development and continue to expand our SAFEbody™ pipeline powered by our innovative masking technology platform. We look forward to his invaluable guidance in clinical development of anti-CTLA-4 therapy as we work to redefine the future of precision immunotherapy.”

From 2021 to 2024 Dr. Axel Hoos served as CEO of Scorpion Therapeutics, which was acquired by Eli Lilly in 2025 for up to $2.5 billion. Previously, Dr. Hoos was the SVP and Head of the Oncology Therapeutic Area at GSK, where he oversaw the rebuilding of GSK’s Oncology business after its divestiture to Novartis in 2015.

Prior to GSK, Dr. Hoos was the Global Medical Lead in Immunology/Oncology at Bristol-Myers Squibb (BMS) where he and his team developed YERVOY® (Ipilimumab), the first immune checkpoint inhibitor drug, and created the term Immuno-Oncology to characterize the interplay of the immune system and cancer in immunotherapy drug development.

Dr. Hoos received his M.D. in Medicine from Heidelberg University, and his Ph.D. in Molecular Oncology from the German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ). He trained in general surgery at the Technical University of Munich and as a fellow in cancer research at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center and is an alumnus of the Program for Leadership Development at Harvard Business School.

About Adagene
Adagene Inc. (Nasdaq: ADAG) is a platform-driven, clinical-stage biotechnology company committed to transforming the discovery and development of novel antibody-based cancer immunotherapies. Adagene combines computational biology and artificial intelligence to design novel antibodies that address globally unmet patient needs. The company has forged strategic collaborations with reputable global partners that leverage its SAFEbody precision masking technology in multiple approaches at the vanguard of science.

Powered by its proprietary Dynamic Precision Library (DPL) platform, composed of NEObody™, SAFEbody®, and POWERbody™ technologies, Adagene’s highly differentiated pipeline features novel immunotherapy programs. The company’s SAFEbody technology is designed to address safety and tolerability challenges associated with many antibody therapeutics by using precision masking technology to shield the binding domain of the biologic therapy. Through activation in the tumor microenvironment, this allows for tumor-specific targeting of antibodies, while minimizing on-target off-tumor toxicity in healthy tissues.

Adagene’s lead clinical program, ADG126 (muzastotug), is a masked, anti-CTLA-4 SAFEbody that targets a unique epitope of CTLA-4 in regulatory T cells (Tregs) in the tumor microenvironment. ADG126 is currently in phase 1b/2 clinical studies in combination with anti-PD-1 therapy, particularly focused on Metastatic Microsatellite-stable (MSS) Colorectal Cancer (CRC). Validated by ongoing clinical research, the SAFEbody platform can be applied to a wide variety of antibody-based therapeutic modalities, including Fc empowered antibodies, antibody-drug conjugates, and bi/multispecific T-cell engagers.

For more information, please visit: https://investor.adagene.com.
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SAFEbody® is a registered trademark in the United States, China, Australia, Japan, Singapore, and the European Union.

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