

Institute of Pathology Heidelberg Joins Thermo Fisher Scientific Center of Excellence Program to Drive Oncology Companion Diagnostic Development in Europe

HEIDELBERG, Germany and CARLSBAD, Calif., Sept. 7, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- [Thermo Fisher Scientific](#) has signed an agreement with the Institute of Pathology Heidelberg (IPH) to establish its Center of Molecular Pathology at Heidelberg University Hospital as the newest member of the Next Generation Sequencing Companion Dx Center of Excellence Program (COEP). The initiative focuses on forging strategic collaborations with leading, European-based organizations that can lead studies using Thermo Fisher's Oncomine portfolio of research panels destined for development as companion diagnostics to help drive precision oncology in the region.

Working in collaboration with pharmaceutical partners and Thermo Fisher, the IPH Center of Molecular Pathology, headed by Dr. Albrecht Stenzinger, will conduct studies and clinical trials under the leadership of Professor Peter Schirmacher, director of the Institute of Pathology of Heidelberg University Hospital. Leaders in their field, Stenzinger and his team have in-depth expertise with Thermo Fisher's next-generation sequencing (NGS) platforms and various gene panels, which they use to profile in clinical trials across several cancer types and more than 3,500 samples in clinical diagnostics annually.

The Institute is also the site of Germany's largest tissue biobank, featuring a sophisticated laboratory information management system that has incorporated Thermo Fisher's Ion Torrent bioinformatics software. Coupled with its biomarker development and translational diagnostics program, the IPH is uniquely positioned as an ideal Thermo Fisher partner to develop NGS-based diagnostics.

"Molecular pathology is a multidimensional and rapidly evolving field where high-level expertise ranging from genetics to trial design and close collaborations are the key for innovation that ultimately benefits patients," Stenzinger said. "Liquid biopsies, genetic biomarkers guiding immunotherapy approaches and clinically exploitable genetic themes that are shared by many cancer types, such as DNA repair deficiency, are currently the most exciting and promising areas for diagnostic applications and will keep us busy in assay development, daily diagnostics, and clinical trials."

Heidelberg University Hospital is one of the largest medical centers in Europe with its unique campus site shared with the German Cancer Research Center. It is characterized by its pursuit of developing innovative methods in diagnosis and treatment, while its clinical research arm has long been an early adopter of leading technology.

Thermo Fisher key opinion leaders, Stenzinger and his team member Dr. Volker Endris, head of Research and Development, has provided expert guidance toward the development of assays and relevant content for clinical research applications in liquid biopsy and immuno-oncology prior to joining the COEP. The IPH Center of Molecular Pathology is the second organization to join the COEP after the Institute of Medical Genetics and Pathology at University Hospital Basel, which joined in April.

"With an ever increasing number of drugs coming to market, scalable detection of clinically relevant biomarkers that enable targeted therapies and the use of agents modulating the immune system will be the key for successful implementation of precision oncology," said Joydeep Goswami, president of clinical next-generation sequencing and oncology for Thermo Fisher Scientific. "We are committed to companion diagnostic development and will continue on this path with leading global organizations that share our vision of a healthier world."

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