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Siemens Healthcare joins CANCER-ID

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Siemens Healthcare has joined the CANCER-ID consortium, an initiative of the European Union's Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI), to explore the potential of blood-based biomarkers to revolutionize the detection and treatment of cancer.

This consortium currently includes 33 partners from 13 countries working together to establish standard protocols for the clinical validation of blood-based biomarkers. These biomarkers, including circulating tumor cells (CTCs), are potential indicators for the tumor burden of patients living with cancer, especially for patients for whom biopsies of the tumor are not available. Blood-based tests (also known as "Liquid Biopsies") that could detect and track CTCs would offer the convenience of a simple blood test that allows doctors to reliably monitor a patient's condition. The information provided by these simple tests may improve the range and efficacy of treatment options from which physicians and their patients could choose.

"By participating in and contributing to this consortium, we believe we can more quickly expand our knowledge of biology of biomarkers like CTCs. This will accelerate the development of innovative technologies and assays for clinical applications to detect cancer, identify the best treatment options for patients with these life-threatening diseases, and determine the effectiveness of their care," said Mr Trevor Hawkins, senior vice-president Siemens Clinical Laboratory.

CANCER-ID brings together experts from academic and clinical research, innovative Small-to-Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs), diagnostic companies such as Siemens Healthcare Diagnostics, and the pharmaceutical industry to establish the clinical utility of liquid biopsies for the detection and treatment of cancer.

"Blood-based analysis of tumor derived cells and nucleic acids offer a novel concept of liquid biopsies which can provide real-time information relevant to cancer diagnosis and therapy," said Prof. Klaus Pantel, head of the Department of Tumor Biology at the University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf and one of the academic leads for the consortium. He added, "The CANCER-ID project fills the substantial gap between basic research focused on novel methods for the detection and characterization of circulating tumor cells and nucleic acids and the development of robust validated assays required to bring

the liquid biopsy concept into the clinic."

The Innovative Medicines Initiative is a partnership between the European Union and the European pharmaceutical industry, represented by the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA). Through the IMI program, IMI has a budget of â‚¬3.3 billion for the period 2014-2024. Half of this comes from the EU's research and innovation program, Horizon 2020. The other half comes from large companies, mostly from the pharmaceutical sector; these do not receive any EU funding, but contribute to the projects 'in kind', for example by donating their researchers' time or providing access to research facilities or resources.