

Kyowa Kirin Appoints Gunnar F. Kaufmann, Ph.D., as Chief Research Officer, North America



Kyowa Kirin, Inc., an affiliate of Kyowa Kirin Co., Ltd., a Japan-based global specialty pharmaceutical company announced that Gunnar Kaufmann, Ph.D., has been named Chief Research Officer (CRO). Dr. Kaufmann joins Kyowa Kirin North America (KKNA) from Oncternal Therapeutics, Inc., where he served as Chief Scientific Officer. In his new role, Dr. Kaufmann will oversee KKNA's team of researchers based in La Jolla, CA, as well as the Open Innovation Department, which seeks external partnerships to accelerate drug discovery and the application of new biotechnologies. He also serves as an Adjunct Assistant Professor at The Scripps Research Institute in the Departments of Chemistry and Immunology and Microbial Science.

"Dr. Kaufmann's proven track record of leading drug discovery, research, and preclinical development will help Kyowa Kirin grow our future pipeline with new drug targets and therapeutic candidates that have the potential to address patients' unmet needs," said Yoshifumi Torii, Ph.D., Global Research Head of Kyowa Kirin. "We look forward to continuing to grow our collaborations with academic and technology partners to fulfill our scientific and clinical ambitions."

An immunologist and chemical biologist, Dr. Kaufmann has experience in discovery and preclinical development of small molecule and biotherapeutics drug product candidates, including monoclonal antibodies, bispecific antibodies, antibody drug conjugates, cellular therapies, and vaccines. He brings expertise in multiple therapeutic areas, including immunology and oncology, as well as preclinical research strategies. He has, throughout his career, taken projects from inception through non-clinical R&D into clinical trials.

In his most recent role as CSO at Oncternal Therapeutics, he led all preclinical research activities, oversaw the non-clinical development of a CAR T cell therapy as well as a small molecule prostate cancer program and supported translational research for the clinical programs. Previously, he held numerous roles of increasing responsibility at Sorrento Therapeutics, Inc., most recently serving as Senior Vice President of Immunotherapy, Head of Research and Global Partnerships. There, he built and led a discovery, research, and preclinical development team that successfully supported Sorrento's pipeline of therapeutic and immuno-oncology antibodies, bispecific antibodies, ADCs, oncolytic viruses, and cellular therapies. He also established an immuno-oncology research focus that resulted in a comprehensive portfolio, including out-licensed therapies.

Dr. Kaufmann is an active member of the American Association for Cancer Research, the American Association of Immunologists, the Society for Immunotherapy of Cancer, and the American Society for Clinical Oncology. He has authored more than 50 peer-reviewed publications. He received his Ph.D. in Biology from The Scripps Research Institute, his Master of Science in Human Biology from the University of Greifswald, Germany, and his Bachelor of Science in Human Biology from The Philipps University, Germany.

"I am honored to join Kyowa Kirin and work on innovative projects and partnerships that can contribute to addressing unmet medical needs," said Dr. Kaufmann. "I look forward to working with the incredible KKNA research team and our academic partners, including collaborators at the La Jolla Institute for Immunology, to bring new therapies to patients, their families and caregivers as well as the broader community that surrounds us all."

About Kyowa Kirin Kyowa Kirin strives to create and deliver novel medicines with life-changing value. As a Japan-based Global Specialty Pharmaceutical Company with a more than 70-year heritage, we apply cutting-edge science including expertise in antibody research and engineering, to address the needs of patients and society across multiple therapeutic areas including Nephrology, Oncology, Immunology/Allergy and Neurology. Across our four regions – Japan, Asia Pacific, North America, and EMEA/International – we focus on our purpose to make people smile, and are united by our shared values of commitment to life, teamwork/Wa, innovation, and integrity.

Source: [Kyowa Kirin](#)

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