

## Walden Biosciences Launches to Transform the Treatment of Kidney Disease

*Focused on Developing First-in-Class, Targeted Therapies to Reverse the Progression of  
Rare and Common Forms of Kidney Disease*

*\$51M Series A Financing Led by Blue-Chip Investors, ARCH Venture Partners and UCB  
Ventures*

*Accomplished Team with Proven Track Record in Drug Development Includes Drs. Blaine  
McKee, President and CEO and Steven Gillis, Chairman*

*Company to Advance Research Pioneered by World-Renowned Renal Disease  
Investigators and Scientific Co-Founders, Drs. Jochen Reiser and Sanja Sever*

Cambridge, MA – October 6, 2020—Walden Biosciences, Inc. (Walden), a biotechnology company focused on transforming the treatment of kidney disease, today announced its launch with a \$51 million Series A financing led by ARCH Venture Partners and UCB Ventures. Walden is seeking to develop breakthrough medicines that reverse the progression of both rare and common forms of kidney disease and restore renal function.

The majority of renal drug development approaches focus on reducing general physiologic stressors, including hypertension, diabetes, and inflammation that lead to chronic kidney disease. While these approaches provide some benefit to the more than 850 million individuals living with renal disease,<sup>1</sup> they do not stop the inevitable progression to renal failure, the need for dialysis, and organ transplantation. Walden intends to advance the treatment of renal disease by addressing kidney-specific cell types and biologic processes to produce therapies that restore renal function rather than slow its decline.

“Kidney disease is a public health crisis and there is an urgent need to develop innovative therapies that directly target the disease and provide an alternative to dialysis or transplant,” said Blaine McKee, Ph.D., President and CEO of Walden Biosciences. “Walden seeks to revolutionize the field of nephrology and we are relentlessly focused on changing the way patients with all forms of kidney disease are treated.”

Walden believes that improving the function of podocytes - cells within the kidney that play an active role in the filtration process - represents the next frontier of renal medicine. The Company is building on the decades-long, breakthrough work of its scientific founders to develop first-in-class, highly-targeted therapies focused on podocytes and the restoration of kidney function. Walden has active programs that address two novel targets for therapeutic

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<sup>1</sup> *Kidney International* (2019) 96, 1048–1050; <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.kint.2019.07.012>.

intervention: soluble urokinase plasminogen activating receptor (suPAR) and dynamin. Targeting both suPAR and dynamin may be beneficial across numerous types of renal diseases.

suPAR is a protein that connects the kidney to the immune system and is used as an inflammatory biomarker. Elevated suPAR levels have long been associated with an excess of protein in the urine, or proteinuria, a decline in kidney function, and eventual reduction in the glomerular filtration rate (GFR). By inhibiting suPAR, Walden aims to reduce proteinuria, remove unwanted kidney inflammation, and improve kidney function.

Dynamin is a protein that is critical to maintaining the structural integrity of podocytes and the glomerular filtration barrier in the kidney. If dynamin is reduced or loses function, this can also result in proteinuria. By stimulating or activating dynamin, Walden will aim to restore podocyte health and reduce proteinuria, ultimately improving the function of damaged kidneys.

The Walden team includes recognized leaders in renal disease treatment, antibody research, and company-building. Company leaders include Blaine McKee, Ph.D., President and Chief Executive Officer and Alex Duncan, Ph.D., Chief Scientific Officer.

The founders of Walden are investors, physicians, and scientists with extensive experience in kidney disease, molecular biology, and genetics:

- Jochen Reiser, M.D., Ph.D. is the chairman of the Department of Internal Medicine at Rush University Medical Center and the Ralph C. Brown, M.D. Professor of Medicine at Rush University.
- Sanja Sever, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor of Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard University.
- Ari Nowacek, M.D., Ph.D. is a principal at ARCH Venture Partners.

“In helping to catalyze the formation of the Company, we were impressed with the provocative work of Drs. Reiser and Sever as well as their critical understanding of podocyte function,” said Steven Gillis, Ph.D., Managing Director, ARCH Venture Partners and Chairman of the Board of Walden Biosciences. “The team being assembled at Walden has a deep understanding of renal disease and therapeutic drug development, which will serve us well on our quest to change the way kidney disease is treated. The Company is pursuing a unique approach and I look forward to seeing the potential impact Walden’s first-in-class therapies will have on patients suffering from kidney disease.”

### **About Walden Biosciences**

Walden Biosciences is a biotechnology company focused on transforming the treatment of kidney disease. Founded by world-renowned experts in renal disease, Walden is applying its unique, systems-based approach to address the intersection between the pathology and biology of kidney disease. Walden was launched in 2020 by ARCH Venture Partners and UCB Ventures and is headquartered in Cambridge, MA. For more information, please visit

[www.waldenbiosciences.com](http://www.waldenbiosciences.com).

### **About ARCH Venture Partners**

ARCH Venture Partners invests in advanced technology companies and is one of the largest early stage technology venture firms in the United States. The firm is a recognized leader in commercializing technologies developed at academic institutions, corporate research groups and national laboratories. ARCH invests primarily in companies it co-founds with leading scientists and entrepreneurs, bringing innovations in life sciences and physical sciences to market.

For more information, visit [www.archventure.com](http://www.archventure.com).

### **About UCB Ventures**

UCB Ventures is a €150 million strategic corporate venture fund established in 2017 to further strengthen UCB's ability to create value from novel insights and technologies that can transform the lives of patients suffering from severe diseases. UCB Ventures invests in innovative therapeutics and technology platforms that are early stage and higher risk, in areas adjacent to or even beyond UCB's therapeutic focus on neurology/neurodegenerative diseases, immunology and muscular skeletal/bone health. UCB Ventures takes an active role in its portfolio companies, contributing expertise in drug discovery, development and operations. Visit [www.UCBVentures.com](http://www.UCBVentures.com) to learn more.

### **Media Contact**

FTI Consulting  
Robert Stanislaro  
[Robert.Stanislaro@fticonsulting.com](mailto:Robert.Stanislaro@fticonsulting.com)

-OR-

Helen O'Gorman  
[Helen.O'Gorman@fticonsulting.com](mailto:Helen.O'Gorman@fticonsulting.com)