

## **Spin-out company Tucana Health Ltd creates jobs in Cork**

Press Release

Cork 15th February 2016

Tucana Health Ltd (Tucana), a spin-out from the APC Microbiome Institute in University College Cork, is to build a new research team in Cork. The APC Microbiome Institute, funded by Science Foundation Ireland, investigates the role of the gut microbiota, the trillions of microbes that live in the human gut, in human health and disease. Tucana Health Ltd. was founded by Professors Fergus Shanahan and Paul O'Toole to investigate the composition of bacterial communities in the gut, and to use this information to aid the diagnosis and treatment of disease. Recent advances in the field have highlighted the importance of the gut microbiome, not only for the development of safe and efficacious new therapeutics, but also in the discovery of novel personalised diagnostic tools.

Tucana Health Ltd. has just been acquired by 4D pharma plc, a pharmaceutical company focusing on the development of live biotherapeutics, a novel and emerging class of drugs. 4D pharma's investment will be used to build further research capability in Tucana Health, and to hire key research staff. Initially, the focus will be on the diagnosis and patient stratification for Irritable Bowel Syndrome ("IBS"). Longer term the company will focus on building a diagnostic platform across multiple disease areas mirroring the programmes developed by MicroRx, 4D pharma's proprietary platform for the discovery of novel live biotherapeutics. This work will be led by Prof. Fergus Shanahan and Prof. Paul O'Toole, the founders of Tucana.

"Tucana Health is an outstanding example of how sustained public investment in fundamental research leads to economic and societal impacts over the medium to long term, creating jobs for a growing team of skilled researchers over the next couple of years" said Professor Fergus Shanahan, Director, APC Microbiome Institute and co-founder of Tucana Health. "We are keen to expand our research team with motivated scientists, and we are currently recruiting ambitious researchers with molecular biology and bioinformatics skills who would like to be part of this exciting new venture" added Professor Paul O'Toole, Principal Investigator in the APC Microbiome Institute and co-founder of Tucana Health.

Duncan Peyton, CEO of 4D pharma Plc, commented: "We believe the diagnostic platform developed by Tucana Health will become an important part of patient care, giving health professionals an understanding of how, or more importantly whether, a patient will respond to a therapeutic regime; but also expanding the

information within 4D pharma to understand and potentially address new therapeutic areas.”

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### **About the APC Microbiome Institute**

The APC Microbiome Institute is a Science Foundation Ireland-funded research institute which investigates the role of the gut microbiota, the trillions of microbes that live in the human gut, in human health and disease. Co-ordinated by University College Cork, APC Microbiome Institute’s partners are Teagasc, the Irish Agriculture and Food Development Authority, Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) and industry. The APC already collaborates with 4D pharma on a €4.8 million four-year project that focuses on the discovery and development of live biotherapeutics for Autism Spectrum Disorder and associated CNS Disorders.