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CATO RESEARCH ANNOUNCES MERGER WITH SMS-ONCOLOGY

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Combination Broadens Company's Global Solutions Supporting Drug Development

DURHAM, NC – October 28, 2019 – [Cato Research, LLC](#) (CATO) announced today that it has merged with [Specialized Medical Services-oncology BV](#) (SMS-oncology) to bolster its portfolio of global solutions dedicated to supporting life science organizations with advancing drug development. The combined company will transition to the new name, CATO SMS, in the coming year.

By joining forces, CATO and SMS-oncology expand their presence across Europe and North America, deepen their oncology and regulatory expertise, and broaden their suite of services. Headquartered in Schiphol, the Netherlands, SMS-oncology is one of the few full-service contract research organizations (CROs) in the world dedicated to oncology. The boutique CRO's deep expertise in designing and executing complex oncology and immuno-oncology trials complements CATO's regulatory knowledge and drug development services.

"CATO and SMS-oncology bring a powerful blend of capabilities focused on supporting small and mid-sized biotech and pharmaceutical companies with their innovative research. Our companies share strong cultural values, anchored by a commitment to high quality and personalized customer service. Together, we're focused on growing and enhancing our services to build an industry-leading company specializing in complex therapeutic areas, including oncology, cell and gene therapy, and rare treatments," said Mark A. Goldberg, M.D., executive chairman, CATO.

Philine van den Tol, CEO, SMS-oncology, added, "Coming together with CATO is an important step toward our objective of providing clients with a broader set of solutions supported by the high-touch service that they expect from us. We can now offer our clients an expanded geographic footprint in the United States and Canada, as well as additional access to valuable drug development and regulatory expertise. We're especially excited to engage CATO's expertise in working with the FDA."

Ms. Van den Tol and the management team will continue to lead the company's operations. Dr. Goldberg will serve as executive chairman of the combined entity. CATO and SMS-oncology will operate under their respective brands until the transition to their new name, CATO SMS, is complete.

CATO's merger with SMS-oncology is the latest step in the company's strategic expansion since Water Street Healthcare Partners and JLL Partners invested in the company last year. The health care investors recently announced the acquisition of THREAD, a provider of innovative technology that enables virtual research. CATO can engage THREAD on opportunities where clients want to leverage its platform to modernize their clinical studies and registries through technology-enabled interactions.

Financial terms of the merger are not being disclosed. Achelous Partners LLC served as financial advisers to SMS-oncology on the merger.

About SMS-oncology

SMS-oncology is Europe's leading full-service CRO solely dedicated to oncology. With its unique business model of integrating oncology drug development affairs and clinical operations, SMS-oncology covers the whole value chain from trial design to setup, management and completion of phase I to IV oncology trials. With nearly 100 employees, SMS-oncology operates in more than 20 countries from its headquarters, located near Schiphol Airport in the Netherlands and EMA in Amsterdam, as well as

locally from Belgium, Germany, Spain and the Nordics. SMS-oncology nurtures a high-performance culture; its dedicated team of professionals thrive on accomplishing operational excellence, extraordinary results, and cooperating toward the goals and milestones of its clients. Please refer to [sms-oncology.com](https://www.sms-oncology.com).

About Cato Research

Founded in 1988 by Dr. Allen Cato and Lynda Sutton and headquartered near Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, Cato Research specializes in drug development support for clients in the pharmaceutical, biotechnology, and medical device industries. Services range from design and management of preclinical and clinical studies to submission of regulatory documents required for marketing approval. With a staff of more than 200 and offices located in the United States, Europe, Canada, Israel, and South Africa, the Cato Research team consistently demonstrates an unsurpassed level of responsiveness, flexibility, attention to detail, and passion for bringing their clients' products to market with speed and cost-effectiveness. For more information about Cato Research, visit [cato.com](https://www.cato.com).

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