

DELIVERING BETTER CANCER OUTCOMES WITH THE BEST TEAMS

Checkmate Pharmaceuticals, a clinical stage immuno-oncology company, is focused on pioneering new medicines for combating melanoma, non-melanoma skin cancers, and head and neck cancer. Dr. James Wooldridge, Chief Medical Officer, has partnered with The Chase Group on executive search projects because of the thoroughness, productivity, and expert evaluations he receives from Chase as he builds out his clinical development and regulatory affairs teams at this fast-moving startup.

“Chase is precise in their communications about why a candidate is interested and what they’re looking for in a new position or a move. Chase gives us their take on the subjective qualities of a candidate and makes it easy for us to confirm these qualities in an interview and make the best decision in the end. Chase saves us time and delivers quality work, and that’s worth a lot.”



– Dr. James Wooldridge
Chief Medical Officer



For Dr. James Wooldridge, a fellowship-trained medical oncologist, his career in medicine and the biopharmaceutical industry has come nearly full circle.

The cancer-fighting immunotherapy innovations he first saw invented at the University of Iowa’s Carver College of Medicine nearly 20 years ago during his time there in post-graduate training and on faculty are the basis for the work he and his team of clinical development scientists are using to power new therapies at Checkmate Pharmaceuticals.

This unique perspective, combined with his experience as Chief Medical Officer at Checkmate, make Wooldridge one of the best-qualified leaders in the industry when it comes to building the right teams of scientists, physicians, and life sciences entrepreneurs focused on immunotherapies. To find his most senior executives for these teams, Wooldridge works with The Chase Group.

Wooldridge first met the Chase team when he made his own professional transition from academia to industry in 2006. It has been a productive collaboration over the years that has led to many executive search projects since then.

“I’ve always been impressed with the quality of the communications, interactions, and people at The Chase Group,” Wooldridge said. “I know firsthand how they treat candidates, how they treat hiring managers, and how they handle engagements, which is why I continue to work with them and recommend them. They’re smart and I value their instincts.”

Subjective Insights Provide a Hiring Edge

Wooldridge was focused on research and teaching at the University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine before being recruited by The Chase Group to join Eli Lilly and Company in 2006. During his tenure at Eli Lilly, Wooldridge was promoted numerous times, ultimately advancing to become Chief Scientific Officer for Immuno-Oncology Clinical Development.

Wooldridge worked with Chase on Medical Affairs recruitment during his time at Lilly before moving on to clinical stage startup Aeglea BioTherapeutics, and now Checkmate.

Wooldridge is a fan of Chase, and partners with his human resources team when hiring an outside executive search firm.

"I like Chase because I've worked with them a long time, but my HR colleagues have the final say," Wooldridge said. "I'm glad to make the introductions and recommendations, but Chase must still earn the respect and approval of HR. They've won over HR every time which is why I'm always glad to make the introduction and connection."

Wooldridge also appreciates the insights and opinions of the Chase team and said their ability to read between the lines is an intangible skill that is hard to find.

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"Chase has the ability to assess a candidate's trajectory and career potential, meaning they don't just report on what a candidate has done, but also provide guidance on how a candidate is likely to perform in the future," Wooldridge said. "And their predictions are usually spot on."

"Soft skills are another area where Chase excels," said Wooldridge. Finding the right titles is just one small part of a project. Assessing character takes finesse and intuition.



- Checkmate is a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company
- Publicly Traded (NASDAQ: CMPI)
- Founded: 2015
- Headquarters: Cambridge, Mass.

Project Pains and Gains

- > Checkmate Pharmaceuticals develops immuno-oncology treatments for melanoma, non-melanoma skin cancers, and head and neck cancers using a new class of anti-cancer therapeutics called "Toll-like receptor 9 (TLR9) agonists."
- > Chief Medical Officer Dr. James Wooldridge has worked with The Chase Group for the past 15 years on multiple executive hires in medical affairs, clinical development, and regulatory affairs.
- > Wooldridge likes working with The Chase group for several reasons, including their keen insights, outstanding candidate summaries; and dependable recommendations he can trust.

"Finding candidates through online networks or databases is one thing, but Chase knows how to discover the real underlying motivations of a candidate and what's likely to move them to make a change," Wooldridge said. "Chase's approach is authentically win-win for both the candidate and the company and never forced."

Finally, in a biotech environment like Checkmate, every minute counts and Wooldridge has little time for indecision or ambiguity when it comes to deciphering findings and recommendations. When candidates are presented, Wooldridge likes the efficiency and clarity of Chase's candidate summaries.

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