XWELL Reaffirms Commitment to Biosecurity, Appoints Former CDC Senior Advisor

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Company Builds on U.S Biosecurity Leadership to Advance Pathogen Surveillance Internationally

NEW YORK, Jan. 08, 2026 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- XWELL, Inc. (Nasdaq: XWEL) ("XWELL" or the "Company"), a leading provider of wellness solutions for people on the go, today announced the continued expansion of its global biosecurity strategy, leveraging its traveler-based pathogen surveillance capabilities to support international travel hubs and large-scale mass gathering events worldwide.

To support this next phase of growth, XWELL announced today that Cindy Friedman, M.D., former CDC senior advisor and the founding director of CDC's [Traveler-based Genomic Surveillance (TGS)] program, will serve as a senior advisor to the Company. In this role, Dr. Friedman will provide strategic guidance on the design and adaptation of traveler-based surveillance approaches for select international biosecurity initiatives.

"XWELL has long been committed to advancing biosecurity at scale," said Ezra Ernst, CEO of XWELL. "Our team already works closely with public health authorities in major travel hubs around the world, and having Dr. Friedman's expertise, leadership and global network will allow us to move faster as we expand globally."

Over the past three years, XWELL has supported the CDC's TGS program in association with Ginkgo Bioworks, contributing to one of the largest traveler-based pathogen surveillance initiatives ever implemented in the United States. This work has enabled early detection and monitoring of emerging infectious diseases at international points of entry.

Building on its U.S. foundation, XWELL is now expanding its biosecurity strategy internationally, focusing on applying proven surveillance models to global travel hubs and large-scale mass gatherings, including major religious and sporting events. The company currently operates wellness and biosecurity programs across seven major U.S. airports and works closely with public health stakeholders in major international travel corridors.

Dr. Cindy Friedman is an infectious disease physician and public health leader with more than 30 years of experience building and scaling disease surveillance programs. She was the architect of CDC's Traveler-based Genomic Surveillance (TGS) program, a landmark initiative designed to monitor emerging pathogens at international points of entry.

Through the TGS program, XWELL collaborated with the CDC and Ginkgo Bioworks to support sample collection and analysis across multiple U.S. airports. As part of its global expansion strategy, XWELL is actively exploring opportunities to extend its biosecurity footprint into Europe and the Middle East, including Turkey, Dubai, and Saudi Arabia—regions that host some of the world's most complex and high-impact mass gathering events. Dr. Friedman will provide strategic guidance to XWELL on the design and deployment of surveillance programs tailored to these environments.

"I've spent much of my career building large-scale public health surveillance programs that work in complex real-world settings. I'm looking forward to advising XWELL as it expands its biosecurity efforts into select international markets," said Dr. Friedman.

With a strong track record in large-scale surveillance and experience operating in complex travel environments, XWELL is positioned to play an increasingly important role in shaping how biosecurity programs are designed and implemented in global travel and mass gathering event settings.

For more information about XWELL and its biosecurity initiatives, visit www.xwell.com.

About XWELL, Inc.

XWELL, Inc. (Nasdaq: XWEL) is redefining the modern wellness experience. Through its portfolio of brands —XpresSpa®, Naples Wax Center®, XpresCheck®, and HyperPointe™ — XWELL makes self-care accessible, elevated and entirely on your terms. With locations in airports and metropolitan areas worldwide, XWELL helps people feel their best wherever life takes them.

Forward-Looking Statements

This press release may contain "forward-looking" statements within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995, Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended. These include statements preceded by, followed by or that otherwise include the words "believes," "expects," "anticipates," "estimates," "projects," "intends," "should," "seeks," "future," "continue," or the negative of such terms, or other comparable terminology. Important factors that could cause actual results to differ materially from those indicated by such forward-looking statements include, without limitation: the anticipated use of proceeds from the private placement. Forward-looking statements relating to expectations about future results or events are based upon information available to XWELL as of the date of this press release, and are not guarantees of the future performance of the Company, and actual results may vary materially from *the results and expectations discussed. Additional information concerning these and other risks is contained in the Company's Annual Report on Form 10-K, as amended, Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q and Current Reports on Form 8-K, and other Securities and Exchange Commission filings. All subsequent written and oral forward-looking statements concerning XWELL, or other matters and attributable to XWELL or any person acting on its behalf are expressly qualified in their entirety by the cautionary statements above. XWELL does not undertake any obligation to publicly update any of these forward-looking statements to reflect events or circumstances that may arise after the date hereof.*

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