

| OMB APPROVAL                                 |           |
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Check this box if no longer subject to Section 16. Form 4 or Form 5 obligations may continue. See Instruction 1(b).

**STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP**

Filed pursuant to Section 16(a) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 or Section 30(h) of the Investment Company Act of 1940

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| 1. Name and Address of Reporting Person*<br><u>Vahanian Nicholas N.</u><br><br>(Last) (First) (Middle)<br><u>C/O NEWLINK GENETICS CORPORATION</u><br><u>2503 SOUTH LOOP DR., SUITE 5100</u><br><br>(Street)<br><u>AMES IA 50010</u><br><br>(City) (State) (Zip) | 2. Issuer Name and Ticker or Trading Symbol<br><u>NEWLINK GENETICS CORP [ (NLNK) ]</u> | 5. Relationship of Reporting Person(s) to Issuer (Check all applicable)<br><br>Director 10% Owner<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Officer (give title below) Other (specify below)<br><u>President, Chief Medical Office</u> |
|   | 3. Date of Earliest Transaction (Month/Day/Year)<br><u>03/09/2018</u>                  |   |
| 4. If Amendment, Date of Original Filed (Month/Day/Year)  |  |   |

**Table I - Non-Derivative Securities Acquired, Disposed of, or Beneficially Owned**

| 1. Title of Security (Instr. 3) | 2. Transaction Date (Month/Day/Year) | 2A. Deemed Execution Date, if any (Month/Day/Year) | 3. Transaction Code (Instr. 8) |   | 4. Securities Acquired (A) or Disposed Of (D) (Instr. 3, 4 and 5) |            |       | 5. Amount of Securities Beneficially Owned Following Reported Transaction(s) (Instr. 3 and 4) | 6. Ownership Form: Direct (D) or Indirect (I) (Instr. 4) | 7. Nature of Indirect Beneficial Ownership (Instr. 4) |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|---|---|------------|-------|---|--|---|
|                                 |                                      |  | Code                           | V | Amount  | (A) or (D) | Price |   |  |   |

**Table II - Derivative Securities Acquired, Disposed of, or Beneficially Owned (e.g., puts, calls, warrants, options, convertible securities)**

| 1. Title of Derivative Security (Instr. 3) | 2. Conversion or Exercise Price of Derivative Security | 3. Transaction Date (Month/Day/Year) | 3A. Deemed Execution Date, if any (Month/Day/Year) | 4. Transaction Code (Instr. 8) |   | 6. Date Exercisable and Expiration Date (Month/Day/Year) |     | 7. Title and Amount of Securities Underlying Derivative Security (Instr. 3 and 4) | 8. Price of Derivative Security (Instr. 5) | 9. Number of derivative Securities Beneficially Owned Following Reported Transaction(s) (Instr. 4) | 10. Ownership Form: Direct (D) or Indirect (I) (Instr. 4) | 11. Nature of Indirect Beneficial Ownership (Instr. 4) |                  |                 |       |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|---|--|-----|---|--|--|---|--|------------------|-----------------|-------|
|  |  |                                      |  | Code                           | V | (A)  | (D) |   |  |  |   |  | Date Exercisable | Expiration Date | Title |
| Stock Option (Right to Buy)                | \$7.85   | 03/09/2018                           |  | A                              |   | 126,500  |     | (1)(2)  | (3)  | Common Stock   | 126,500   | \$0  | 126,500          | D               |       |

**Explanation of Responses:**

- Grant to the Reporting Person of a stock option under the Issuer's 2009 Equity Incentive Plan (the "Plan") on March 9, 2018 (the "Date of Grant"). 50% of the option vests and becomes exercisable in a series of 48 successive equal monthly installments beginning on April 1, 2018, provided that at the relevant vesting dates the Reporting Person's continuous service to the Issuer has not been terminated as defined in or as determined under the Plan. The option expires ten years after the Date of Grant.
- The remaining 50% of the stock options vest and become exercisable as follows: (a) 25% of such shares shall vest as to 8.33%, 8.33% and 8.34% on the 1st day of the month following an increase of closing share price on Nasdaq Stock Market by at least 33.33%, 66.66% and 100%, respectively, above the exercise price of the options when measured over 30 consecutive calendar days, provided such increase occurs within four years of the Date of Grant, otherwise such options shall be cancelled; (b) 12.50% of such shares shall vest on the 1st day of the month following the hiring of a new senior operations executive to oversee the Company's chemistry and manufacturing control ("CMC") activities and clinical trials; and (c) the remaining 12.50% of such shares shall vest on the 1st day of the month following completion of a CMC formulation for indoximod for adult patients and completion of a CMC plan for a pediatric formulation of indoximod, the completion of each to be determined by the Board.
- Unless otherwise disclosed, the option expires ten years after the date of grant.

**Remarks:**

/s/ Ryan Trytten, attorney-in-fact 03/13/2018

\*\* Signature of Reporting Person Date

Reminder: Report on a separate line for each class of securities beneficially owned directly or indirectly.

\* If the form is filed by more than one reporting person, see Instruction 4 (b)(v).

\*\* Intentional misstatements or omissions of facts constitute Federal Criminal Violations See 18 U.S.C. 1001 and 15 U.S.C. 78ff(a).

Note: File three copies of this Form, one of which must be manually signed. If space is insufficient, see Instruction 6 for procedure.

Persons who respond to the collection of information contained in this form are not required to respond unless the form displays a currently valid OMB Number.