

Calithera Biosciences, Inc.
Form 424B5
January 30, 2017
Table of Contents

Filed Pursuant to Rule 424(b)(5)

Registration No. 333-207905

Prospectus Supplement

(To Prospectus Dated November 24, 2015)

1,720,430 Shares

Common Stock

Pursuant to this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, we are offering up to 1,720,430 shares of our common stock at an offering price of \$4.65 per share, which was the reported sale price of our common stock on the NASDAQ Global Select Market on January 26, 2017. The shares of common stock offered hereby are being sold directly to Incyte Corporation, who is referred to in this prospectus supplement as the Purchaser, pursuant to a stock purchase agreement dated as of January 27, 2017.

We are not offering shares of our common stock under this prospectus supplement through a placement agent, underwriter or securities broker or dealer. The total proceeds to us, before expenses, will be \$8.0 million, assuming that all of the shares offered hereby are purchased by the Purchaser. We estimate the total expenses of this offering to us will be \$50,000.

Our common stock is listed on the NASDAQ Global Select Market under the symbol CALA. On January 27, 2017, the last reported sale price of our common stock on the NASDAQ Global Select Market was \$4.60 per share.

Investing in our common stock involves a high degree of risk. See Risk Factors beginning on page S-4 of this prospectus supplement as well as those contained in the documents incorporated herein and therein.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities or passed upon the adequacy or accuracy of this prospectus supplement or the

accompanying prospectus. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

We are an emerging growth company under the federal securities laws and are subject to reduced public company reporting requirements.

	Per Share	Total
Offering price and proceeds, before expenses, to us	\$ 4.65	\$ 7,999,999.50

Delivery of the shares is expected to be made on or about January 30, 2017 against payment for such shares to be received by us on the same date.

Prospectus Supplement dated January 30, 2017.

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS
PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT

<u>About this Prospectus Supplement</u>	S-i
<u>Prospectus Supplement Summary</u>	S-1
<u>The Offering</u>	S-3
<u>Risk Factors</u>	S-4
<u>Special Note Regarding Forward-Looking Statements</u>	S-5
<u>Use of Proceeds</u>	S-7
<u>Dilution</u>	S-8
<u>Legal Matters</u>	S-10
<u>Experts</u>	S-10
<u>Where You Can Find Additional Information</u>	S-10
<u>Incorporation of Certain Information by Reference</u>	S-11

PROSPECTUS

<u>About This Prospectus</u>	i
<u>Prospectus Summary</u>	1
<u>Risk Factors</u>	6
<u>Special Note Regarding Forward-Looking Statements</u>	7
<u>Use Of Proceeds</u>	9
<u>Description Of Capital Stock</u>	10
<u>Plan Of Distribution</u>	15
<u>Legal Matters</u>	17
<u>Experts</u>	17
<u>Where You Can Find Additional Information</u>	17
<u>Incorporation Of Certain Information By Reference</u>	17

ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT

This prospectus is part of a registration statement that we have filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, or the SEC, utilizing a shelf registration process. Under the shelf registration process, we may offer shares of our common stock having an aggregate offering price of up to \$150,000,000. Under this prospectus, we describe the specific terms of the common stock being offered by us.

Before buying any of the common stock that we are offering, we urge you to carefully read this prospectus and all of the information incorporated by reference herein and therein, as well as the additional information described under the sections titled Where You Can Find Additional Information and Incorporation Of Certain Information By Reference. These documents contain important information that you should consider when making your investment decision.

We provide information to you about this offering of shares of our common stock in this prospectus, which describes the specific details regarding this offering. If information in this prospectus is inconsistent with documents

incorporated by reference in this prospectus filed prior to the date of this prospectus, you should rely on this prospectus. However, if any statement in one of these documents is inconsistent with a statement in another document having a later date for example, a document incorporated by reference in this prospectus the statement in the document having the later date modifies or supersedes the earlier statement as our business, financial condition, results of operations and prospects may have changed since the earlier dates.

You should rely only on the information contained in, or incorporated by reference into, this prospectus and in any free writing prospectus that we may authorize for use in connection with this offering. We have not authorized

S-i

Table of Contents

any other person to provide you with different information. If anyone provides you with different or inconsistent information, you should not rely on it. We take no responsibility for, and can provide no assurance as to the reliability of, any other information that others may give you. We are not making an offer to sell or soliciting an offer to buy our securities in any jurisdiction in which an offer or solicitation is not authorized or in which the person making that offer or solicitation is not qualified to do so or to anyone to whom it is unlawful to make an offer or solicitation. You should assume that the information appearing in this prospectus, the documents incorporated by reference into this prospectus, and in any free writing prospectus that we may authorize for use in connection with this offering, is accurate only as of the date of those respective documents. Our business, financial condition, results of operations and prospects may have changed since those dates.

Table of Contents

PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT SUMMARY

This summary highlights selected information contained elsewhere in this prospectus or incorporated by reference in this prospectus, and does not contain all of the information that you need to consider in making your investment decision. You should carefully read the entire prospectus, this prospectus supplement, including the risks of investing in our securities discussed under the heading Risk Factors contained in this prospectus supplement, and under similar headings in the other documents that are incorporated by reference into this prospectus. You should also carefully read the information incorporated by reference into this prospectus, including our financial statements, and the exhibits to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part. Unless the context otherwise requires, we use the terms Calithera, Company, we, us and our in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus to refer to Calithera Biosciences, Inc.

Overview

We are a clinical-stage pharmaceutical company focused on discovering and developing novel small molecule oncology drugs directed against tumor and immune cell targets that control key metabolic pathways in the tumor microenvironment. Tumor metabolism and tumor immunology have emerged as promising new interrelated fields for cancer drug discovery, and recent clinical successes with therapeutic agents in each field have demonstrated the potential to create fundamentally new therapies for cancer patients. We are developing agents that take advantage of the unique metabolic requirements of tumor cells and cancer-fighting immune cells such as cytotoxic T-cells. Our lead product candidate, CB-839, is an internally discovered, first-in-class inhibitor of glutaminase, a critical enzyme in tumor cells. CB-839 administered as a single agent has resulted in clinical responses in renal cell cancer and acute myeloid leukemia, or AML, and clinical benefits in several other tumor types. We are currently enrolling patients in a series of combination Phase 1b cohorts in specific solid tumor types, including renal cell carcinoma and triple negative breast cancer.

We are also evaluating the immune-enhancing activity of CB-839 in a separate Phase 1/2 trial in which solid tumor patients are treated with CB-839 in combination with a checkpoint inhibitor. The Phase 1/2 study will assess the safety, pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics of CB-839 and nivolumab and is part of a clinical trial collaboration to evaluate Bristol-Myers Squibb's Opdivo in combination with Calithera's CB-839 in patients with clear cell renal cell carcinoma. The study will enroll patients with clear cell renal cell carcinoma who are either naïve to checkpoint inhibitors, or were recently treated with nivolumab without tumor response. The protocol is designed to also enroll patients with melanoma and non-small cell lung cancer.

CB-839 is also being evaluated in an investigator-sponsored trial in a biomarker-selected colorectal cancer cohort at Case Western Reserve University. The trial is currently enrolling colorectal cancer patients with a PIK3CA mutation for treatment with a combination of CB-839 and capecitabine.

Our second product candidate, CB-1158, is a first-in-class immuno-oncology metabolic checkpoint inhibitor targeting arginase, an immunosuppressive enzyme in myeloid-derived suppressor cells responsible for T-cell suppression and is being co-developed with Incyte Corporation for hematology and oncology indications. Arginase is expressed in myeloid derived suppressor cells (MDSCs) and exerts an immunosuppressive effect on T-cells and NK cells by depleting arginine and blocking activation. Tumor cell infiltrates in patients with solid tumor cancers contain significant numbers of arginase-expressing MDSCs; as a result, these patients have increased levels of plasma arginase and decreased levels of plasma arginine compared to healthy individuals. CB-1158, a highly selective, orally bioavailable, small molecule inhibitor of human arginase with nanomolar potency, has single agent immune-mediated efficacy in multiple syngeneic animal models. Inhibition of tumor growth was accompanied by an increase in the local concentration of arginine, and the induction of multiple pro-inflammatory changes in the tumor microenvironment.

Treatment with CB-1158 also enhanced the anti-tumor activity of adoptive T-cell therapy, checkpoint blockade and chemotherapy in these animal models. CB-1158 is currently being tested in a Phase 1 clinical trial in patients with solid tumors.

S-1

Table of Contents

Risks Associated with our Business

Our business is subject to numerous risks and uncertainties, including those highlighted in the section titled Risk Factors immediately following this prospectus summary. These risks include, among others, the following:

We have incurred significant operating losses since our inception and anticipate that we will continue to incur substantial operating losses for the foreseeable future. We had an accumulated deficit of \$113.0 million as of September 30, 2016.

We will need substantial additional funding and may be unable to raise capital when needed, which would force us to delay, reduce or eliminate our product development programs or commercialization efforts.

Our approach to discovery and development of product candidates that target tumor metabolism and tumor immunology is unproven and may never lead to marketable products.

Clinical trials of our product candidates will be costly and time consuming, and if they fail to demonstrate safety and efficacy to the satisfaction of the FDA, or similar regulatory authorities, we will be unable to commercialize our product candidates.

If serious adverse effects or unexpected characteristics of our product candidates are identified during development, we may need to abandon or limit our development of some or all of our product candidates.

If we are unable to obtain sufficient intellectual property protection or protect our intellectual property rights, our business may be harmed.

Healthcare policy and regulatory oversight in the United States and internationally are subject to rapid change, and if we are unable to respond, our business may be harmed.

We face substantial competition from major pharmaceutical companies, specialty pharmaceutical companies and biotechnology companies worldwide.

If we are unable to adequately address these and other risks we face, our business, financial condition, operating results and prospects may be adversely affected.

In addition, we are an emerging growth company as defined in the Jumpstart Our Business Startups Act, or the JOBS Act, enacted in April 2012, and therefore we intend to take advantage of certain exemptions from various public company reporting requirements, including not being required to have our internal control over financial reporting audited by our independent registered public accounting firm pursuant to Section 404(b) of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002, reduced disclosure obligations regarding executive compensation in this prospectus, our periodic reports and proxy statement and exemptions from the requirements of holding a nonbinding advisory vote on executive

compensation and any golden parachute payments not previously approved. We may take advantage of these exemptions for up to five years or until we are no longer an emerging growth company.

Corporate Information

We were incorporated in Delaware in March 2010 as Protein Activation Therapeutics, Inc. and subsequently changed our name to Calithera Biosciences, Inc. Our headquarters are located at 343 Oyster Point Blvd., Suite 200, South San Francisco, California 94080, and our telephone number is (650) 870-1000. Our website address is www.calithera.com. The information contained on, or that can be accessed through, our website is not part of, and is not incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement and should not be considered to be part of this prospectus supplement. Investors should not rely on any such information in deciding whether to purchase our common stock.

Calithera, the Calithera logo and other trademarks or service marks of Calithera Biosciences, Inc. appearing in this prospectus supplement are the property of Calithera Biosciences, Inc. Other trademarks, service marks or trade names appearing in this prospectus supplement are the property of their respective owners. We do not intend our use or display of other companies' trade names, trademarks or service marks to imply a relationship with, or endorsement or sponsorship of us by, these other companies.

Table of Contents

The Offering

Common Stock offered by us 1,720,430 shares

**Common Stock to be
outstanding immediately after
this offering** 21,820,011 shares

Use of Proceeds We intend to use the net proceeds from this offering, if any, to fund our clinical trials and for working capital and general corporate purposes. See **Use of Proceeds** on page S-7.

Risk Factors See **Risk Factors** beginning on page S-4 and other information included and incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus for a discussion of factors that you should carefully consider before deciding to invest in our common stock.

NASDAQ Global Select Symbol CALA

The number of shares of our common stock to be outstanding after this offering is based on 20,099,581 shares of our common stock outstanding as of September 30, 2016, and excludes:

2,507,737 shares of common stock issuable upon the exercise of outstanding stock options as of September 30, 2016, with a weighted-average exercise price of \$7.45 per share;

757,091 shares of common stock reserved for future issuance under our 2014 Equity Incentive Plan, as well as any automatic increases in the number of shares of common stock reserved for future issuance under this plan; and

431,708 shares of common stock reserved for issuance under our 2014 Employee Stock Purchase Plan, as well as any automatic increases in the number of shares of common stock reserved for future issuance under this plan.

Unless otherwise indicated, all information in this prospectus supplement assumes:

no exercise of outstanding stock options.

Table of Contents

RISK FACTORS

*You should consider carefully the risks described below and discussed in the section titled **Risk Factors** contained in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2015, and in our subsequent Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q as updated by our subsequent filings under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, or the Exchange Act, each of which is incorporated by reference in this prospectus in their entirety, together with other information in this prospectus, and the information and documents incorporated by reference in this prospectus, and any free writing prospectus that we have authorized for use in connection with this offering before you make a decision to invest in our common stock. If any of the following events actually occur, our business, financial condition, results of operations or cash flow could be harmed. This could cause the trading price of our common stock to decline and you may lose all or part of your investment. The risks below and incorporated by reference in this prospectus are not the only ones we face. Additional risks not currently known to us or that we currently deem immaterial may also affect our business operations. Please also read carefully the section below titled **Special Note Regarding Forward-Looking Statements**.*

Risks Related to This Offering

We have broad discretion in the use of the net proceeds from this offering and may not use them effectively.

Our management will have broad discretion in the application of the net proceeds from this offering and could spend the proceeds in ways that do not improve our business, financial condition or results of operations or enhance the value of our common stock. The net proceeds from this offering will be used for working capital and general corporate purposes, which may include, among other things, funding research and development, clinical trials, vendor payables, potential regulatory submissions, hiring additional personnel and capital expenditures. We may also use a portion of the net proceeds to in-license, acquire or invest in complementary businesses or products; however, we have no current commitments or obligations to do so.

The failure by our management to apply these funds effectively could result in financial losses that could harm our business, cause the price of our common stock to decline and delay the development of our product candidates. Pending their use, we may invest the net proceeds from this offering in a manner that does not produce income or that loses value.

Purchaser will experience immediate and substantial dilution in the tangible net book value of their investment.

If you purchase our common stock in this offering, you will incur an immediate dilution of \$1.82 in net tangible book value per share from the price you paid. The exercise of outstanding options will result in further dilution. For a further description of the dilution that you will experience immediately after this offering, see the section titled **Dilution**.

Table of Contents

SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

This prospectus and the documents we have filed with the SEC that are incorporated by reference contain forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, or the Securities Act, and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, or the Exchange Act. These statements relate to future events or to our future operating or financial performance and involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors which may cause our actual results, performance or achievements to be materially different from any future results, performances or achievements expressed or implied by the forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements may include, but are not limited to, statements about:

our ability to fund our working capital requirements;

our ability to obtain and maintain regulatory approval of our product candidates;

our ability to successfully commercialize our product candidates;

the rate and degree of market acceptance of our products that are approved;

our estimates of our expenses, ongoing losses, future revenue, capital requirements and our needs for or ability to obtain additional financing;

our expectation that our existing capital resources and the net proceeds from this offering will be sufficient to enable us to complete our planned clinical trials;

our ability to obtain and maintain intellectual property protection for our product candidates;

our ability to identify and develop new product candidates;

our ability to retain and recruit key personnel;

our use of proceeds from this offering;

our financial performance; and

developments and projections relating to our competitors or our industry.

These risks are not exhaustive. Other sections of this prospectus may include additional factors that could harm our business and financial performance. Moreover, we operate in a very competitive and rapidly changing environment. New risk factors emerge from time to time, and it is not possible for our management to predict all risk factors nor can we assess the impact of all factors on our business or the extent to which any factor, or combination of factors, may cause actual results to differ materially from those contained in, or implied by, any forward-looking statements.

All statements other than statements of historical facts contained in this prospectus, including statements regarding our future financial condition, business strategy and plans, and objectives of management for future operations, are forward-looking statements. In some cases, you can identify forward-looking statements by words such as anticipate, believe, continue, could, design, estimate, expect, intend, may, plan, potentially, predict, sho of these terms or other similar expressions. These statements reflect our current views with respect to future events and are based on assumptions and are subject to risks and uncertainties. Given these uncertainties, you should not place undue reliance on these forward-looking statements. We discuss in greater detail many of these risks under the section titled Risk Factors herein, and in our most recent Annual Report on Form 10-K and in our most recent Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q, as well as any amendments thereto reflected in subsequent filings with the SEC, which are incorporated by reference into this prospectus in their entirety. Also, these forward-looking statements represent our estimates and assumptions only as of the date of the document containing the applicable statement. Unless required by law, we undertake no obligation to update or revise any forward-looking statements to reflect new information or future events or developments. You should read this prospectus supplement, together with the documents we have filed with the SEC that are

Table of Contents

incorporated by reference and any free writing prospectus that we may authorize for use in connection with this offering completely and with the understanding that our actual future results may be materially different from what we expect. We qualify all of the forward-looking statements in the foregoing documents by these cautionary statements.

S-6

Table of Contents

USE OF PROCEEDS

We estimate that the net proceeds from the sale of all of the 1,720,430 shares of common stock that we are offering hereby will be approximately \$7.95 million, after deducting estimated offering expenses payable by us. We intend to use the net proceeds, if any, from this offering for working capital and general corporate purposes, which may include, among other things, funding research and development, clinical trials, vendor payables, potential regulatory submissions, hiring additional personnel and capital expenditures. We may also use a portion of the net proceeds to in-license, acquire or invest in complementary businesses or products; however, we have no current commitments or obligations to do so.

The amounts and timing of our actual expenditures will depend on numerous factors, including our development and commercialization efforts, as well as the amount of cash used in our operations. We therefore cannot estimate with certainty the amount of net proceeds to be used for the purposes described above. We may find it necessary or advisable to use the net proceeds for other purposes, and we will have broad discretion in the application of the net proceeds. Pending the uses described above, we plan to invest the net proceeds from this offering in short-term, investment-grade, interest-bearing securities.

Table of Contents**DILUTION**

If you invest in our common stock, your interest will be diluted to the extent of the difference between the offering price per share and the as adjusted net tangible book value per share of our common stock after this offering.

Our net tangible book value as of September 30, 2016, was \$53.8 million, or \$2.68 per share. Net tangible book value is total tangible assets less our total liabilities divided by the number of outstanding shares of common stock.

After giving effect to the sale of 1,720,430 shares common stock in this offering, and after deducting estimated offering expenses payable by us, our net tangible book value as of September 30, 2016, would have been \$61.8 million, or \$2.83 per share of common stock. This represents an immediate increase in net tangible book value of \$0.15 per share to our existing stockholders and an immediate dilution in net tangible book value of \$1.82 per share to Purchaser. The following table illustrates this dilution per share to the Purchaser in this offering:

Offering price per share	\$ 4.65
Historical net tangible book value per share at September 30, 2016	\$ 2.68
Increase per share attributable to Purchaser	0.15
As adjusted net tangible book value per share after giving effect to this offering	2.83
Dilution in adjusted net tangible book value per share to Purchaser	\$ 1.82

The number of shares of our common stock to be outstanding after this offering is based on 20,099,581 shares of our common stock outstanding as of September 30, 2016, and excludes:

2,507,737 shares of common stock issuable upon the exercise of outstanding stock options as of September 30, 2016, with a weighted-average exercise price of \$7.45 per share;

757,091 shares of common stock reserved for future issuance under our 2014 Equity Incentive Plan, as well as any automatic increases in the number of shares of common stock reserved for future issuance under this plan; and

431,708 shares of common stock reserved for issuance under our 2014 Employee Stock Purchase Plan, as well as any automatic increases in the number of shares of common stock reserved for future issuance under this plan.

To the extent that options are exercised, new options are issued under our equity incentive plans, or we issue additional shares of common stock in the future, there will be further dilution to Purchaser in this offering.

Table of Contents

PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION

We are offering up to 1,720,430 shares of our common stock at an offering price of \$4.65 per share, which was the reported sale price of our common stock on the NASDAQ Global Select Market on January 26, 2017. The shares of common stock offered hereby are being sold directly to the Purchaser and not through a placement agent, underwriter or securities broker or dealer, and we are therefore not paying any underwriting discounts, commissions, concessions or similar compensation for the sale and distribution of the common stock being offered hereby.

We have entered into a stock purchase agreement with the Purchaser covering the sale of the shares offered under this prospectus supplement. A copy of the form of stock purchase agreement between us and the Purchaser will be included as an exhibit to a Current Report on Form 8-K that will be filed with the SEC. We currently anticipate that closing of the sale of all 1,720,430 shares of common stock offered hereby will take place on or about January 30, 2017. The total proceeds to us, before expenses, will be approximately \$8.0 million, assuming that all of the shares offered hereby are purchased by the Purchaser. On the closing date, we will issue the shares of common stock to the Purchaser and we will receive funds in the amount of the aggregate purchase price of the common stock being sold hereby. The estimated offering expenses payable by us for this offering are approximately \$50,000.

The Purchaser has agreed that for 180 days following the date of the stock purchase agreement they will not, directly or indirectly, offer, sell, contract to sell, pledge, grant any option to purchase, make any short sale, or otherwise dispose of or hedge any of our shares of common stock, any options or warrants to purchase shares of our common stock, or any securities convertible into, or exchangeable for or that represent the right to receive shares of our common stock, subject to customary exceptions.

The transfer agent and registrar for our common stock is American Stock Transfer & Trust Company, LLC. The transfer agent's address is 6201 15th Avenue, Brooklyn, New York 11219.

Our common stock is listed on the NASDAQ Global Select Market under the symbol CALA.

Table of Contents

LEGAL MATTERS

Cooley LLP, Palo Alto, California will pass upon the validity of the shares of common stock offered hereby. As of the date of this prospectus supplement, GC&H Investments and GC&H Investments, LLC, entities comprised of partners and associates of Cooley LLP, beneficially own an aggregate of 8,917 shares of our common stock.

EXPERTS

Ernst & Young LLP, independent registered public accounting firm, has audited our financial statements included in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2015, as set forth in their report, which is incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and elsewhere in the registration statement. Our financial statements are incorporated by reference in reliance on Ernst & Young LLP's report, given on their authority as experts in accounting and auditing.

WHERE YOU CAN FIND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This prospectus is part of the registration statement on Form S-3 we filed with the SEC under the Securities Act and does not contain all the information set forth in the registration statement. Whenever a reference is made in this prospectus to any of our contracts, agreements or other documents, the reference may not be complete and you should refer to the exhibits that are a part of the registration statement or the exhibits to the reports or other documents incorporated by reference into this prospectus for a copy of such contract, agreement or other document. Because we are subject to the information and reporting requirements of the Exchange Act, we file annual, quarterly and current reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC. Our SEC filings are available to the public over the Internet at the SEC's website at <http://www.sec.gov>. You may also read and copy any document we file at the SEC's Public Reference Room at 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549. Please call the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330 for further information on the operation of the Public Reference Room.

Table of Contents

INCORPORATION OF CERTAIN INFORMATION BY REFERENCE

The SEC allows us to incorporate by reference information from other documents that we file with it, which means that we can disclose important information to you by referring you to those documents. The information incorporated by reference is considered to be part of this prospectus. Information in this prospectus supersedes information incorporated by reference that we filed with the SEC prior to the date of this prospectus, while information that we file later with the SEC will automatically update and supersede the information in this prospectus. We incorporate by reference into this prospectus and the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part the information or documents listed below that we have filed with the SEC (Commission File No. 001-36644):

our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2015, filed with the SEC on March 15, 2016;

the information specifically incorporated by reference into our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2015 from our definitive proxy statement relating to our 2016 annual meeting of stockholders, which was filed on April 29, 2016;

our Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q for the quarters ended March 31, 2016, June 30, 2016 and September 30, 2016, filed with the SEC on May 10, 2016, August 9, 2016 and November 9, 2016, respectively;

our Current Reports on Form 8-K filed with the SEC on January 22, 2016, March 2, 2016, June 16, 2016, August 10, 2016 and December 12, 2016; and

the description of our common stock in our registration statement on Form 8-A, filed with the SEC on September 25, 2014, including any amendments or reports filed for the purposes of updating such description.

We also incorporate by reference any future filings (other than current reports furnished under Item 2.02 or Item 7.01 of Form 8-K and exhibits filed on such form that are related to such items unless such Form 8-K expressly provides to the contrary) made with the SEC pursuant to Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act, including those made after the date of the initial filing of the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part and prior to effectiveness of such registration statement, until we file a post-effective amendment that indicates the termination of the offering of the shares of our common stock made by this prospectus and will become a part of this prospectus from the date that such documents are filed with the SEC. Information in such future filings updates and supplements the information provided in this prospectus. Any statements in any such future filings will automatically be deemed to modify and supersede any information in any document we previously filed with the SEC that is incorporated or deemed to be incorporated herein by reference to the extent that statements in the later filed document modify or replace such earlier statements.

You can request a copy of these filings, at no cost, by writing or telephoning us at the following address or telephone number:

Edgar Filing: Calithera Biosciences, Inc. - Form 424B5

Calithera Biosciences, Inc.

343 Oyster Point Blvd. Suite 200

South San Francisco, California 94080

(650) 870-1000

Attn: Secretary

Exhibits to the filings will not be sent, however, unless those exhibits have specifically been incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus.

S-11

Table of Contents

PROSPECTUS

\$150,000,000

Common Stock

From time to time, we may offer and sell up to an aggregate amount of \$150,000,000 of shares of common stock.

We will provide the specific terms of these offerings in one or more supplements to this prospectus. We may also authorize one or more free writing prospectuses to be provided to you in connection with these offerings. The prospectus supplement and any related free writing prospectus may also add, update or change information contained in this prospectus. You should carefully read this prospectus, the applicable prospectus supplement and any related free writing prospectus, as well as any documents incorporated by reference, before buying any of the shares of common stock being offered.

Our common stock is listed on the NASDAQ Global Select Market under the trading symbol CALA. On November 6, 2015, the last reported sale price of our common stock was \$10.02 per share. The applicable prospectus supplement will contain information, where applicable, as to other listings, if any, on the NASDAQ Global Select Market or other securities exchange of the shares of common stock covered by the applicable prospectus supplement.

Investing in shares of our common stock involves a high degree of risk. You should review carefully the risks and uncertainties described under the section titled Risk Factors on page 6 of this prospectus and any similar section contained in the applicable prospectus supplement and in any free writing prospectuses we have authorized for use in connection with a specific offering, and under similar headings in the documents that are incorporated by reference into this prospectus.

This prospectus may not be used to consummate a sale of shares of our common stock unless accompanied by a prospectus supplement.

The shares of our common stock may be sold directly by us to investors, through agents designated from time to time or to or through underwriters or dealers, on a continuous or delayed basis. For additional information on the methods of sale, you should refer to the section titled Plan of Distribution in this prospectus. If any agents or underwriters are involved in the sale of any shares of our common stock with respect to which this prospectus is being delivered, the names of such agents or underwriters and any applicable fees, commissions, discounts and over-allotment options will be set forth in a prospectus supplement. The price to the public of such shares of our common stock and the net

proceeds we expect to receive from such sale will also be set forth in a prospectus supplement.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities or determined if this prospectus is truthful or complete. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

The date of this prospectus is November 24, 2015.

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS</u>	i
<u>PROSPECTUS SUMMARY</u>	1
<u>RISK FACTORS</u>	6
<u>SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS</u>	7
<u>USE OF PROCEEDS</u>	9
<u>DESCRIPTION OF CAPITAL STOCK</u>	10
<u>PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION</u>	15
<u>LEGAL MATTERS</u>	17
<u>EXPERTS</u>	17
<u>WHERE YOU CAN FIND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION</u>	17
<u>INCORPORATION OF CERTAIN INFORMATION BY REFERENCE</u>	17

ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS

This prospectus is part of a registration statement on Form S-3 that we filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, or the SEC, using a shelf registration process. Under this shelf registration statement, we may, from time to time, offer and sell in one or more offerings, up to a total dollar amount of \$150,000,000 of shares of our common stock as described in this prospectus.

Each time we offer shares of our common stock under this prospectus, we will provide a prospectus supplement that will contain more specific information about the terms of that offering. We may also authorize one or more free writing prospectuses to be provided to you that may contain material information relating to these offerings. The prospectus supplement and any related free writing prospectus that we may authorize to be provided to you may also add, update or change any of the information contained in this prospectus or in the documents that we have incorporated by reference into this prospectus. We urge you to read carefully this prospectus, any applicable prospectus supplement and any free writing prospectuses we have authorized for use in connection with a specific offering, together with the information incorporated herein by reference as described under the heading Incorporation of Certain Information by Reference, before buying any of the shares of our common stock being offered.

This prospectus may not be used to consummate a sale of shares of our common stock unless it is accompanied by a prospectus supplement.

You should rely only on the information contained in, or incorporated by reference into, this prospectus and any applicable prospectus supplement, along with the information contained in any free writing prospectuses we have authorized for use in connection with a specific offering. We have not authorized anyone to provide you with any information other than that contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus and any applicable prospectus supplement, along with the information contained in any free writing prospectuses we have authorized for use in connection with a specific offering. You must not rely upon any information or representation not contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus, the accompanying prospectus supplement or in any related free writing prospectus that we may authorize to be provided to you. We take no responsibility for, and can provide no assurance as to the reliability of, any other information that others may give you. This prospectus is an offer to sell only the

shares of our common stock offered hereby, but only under circumstances and in jurisdictions where it is lawful to do so.

The information appearing in this prospectus, any applicable prospectus supplement or any related free writing prospectus is accurate only as of the date on the front of the document and that any information we have incorporated by reference is accurate only as of the date of the document incorporated by reference, regardless of

Table of Contents

the time of delivery of this prospectus, any applicable prospectus supplement or any related free writing prospectus, or any sale of shares of our common stock. Our business, financial condition, results of operations and prospects may have changed since those dates.

This prospectus contains and incorporates by reference market data and industry statistics and forecasts that are based on independent industry publications and other publicly available information. Although we believe that these sources are reliable, we do not guarantee the accuracy or completeness of this information and we have not independently verified this information. Although we are not aware of any misstatements regarding the market and industry data presented in this prospectus and the documents incorporated herein by reference, these estimates involve risks and uncertainties and are subject to change based on various factors, including those discussed under the section titled **Risk Factors** contained in the applicable prospectus supplement and any related free writing prospectus, and under similar headings in the other documents that are incorporated by reference into this prospectus. Accordingly, investors should not place undue reliance on this information.

This prospectus contains summaries of certain provisions contained in some of the documents described herein, but reference is made to the actual documents for complete information. All of the summaries are qualified in their entirety by the actual documents. Copies of some of the documents referred to herein have been filed, will be filed or will be incorporated by reference as exhibits to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part, and you may obtain copies of those documents as described below under the section titled **Where You Can Find Additional Information**.

Table of Contents

PROSPECTUS SUMMARY

This summary highlights selected information contained elsewhere in this prospectus or incorporated by reference in this prospectus, and does not contain all of the information that you need to consider in making your investment decision. You should carefully read the entire prospectus, the applicable prospectus supplement and any related free writing prospectus, including the risks of investing in our shares of our common stock discussed under the section titled Risk Factors contained in the applicable prospectus supplement and any related free writing prospectus, and under similar headings in the other documents that are incorporated by reference into this prospectus. You should also carefully read the other information incorporated by reference into this prospectus, including our financial statements, and the exhibits to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part.

Calithera Biosciences, Inc.

Overview

We are a clinical-stage pharmaceutical company focused on discovering and developing novel small molecule drugs directed against tumor metabolism and tumor immunology targets for the treatment of cancer. Tumor metabolism and tumor immunology have emerged as promising new fields for cancer drug discovery, and recent clinical successes with therapeutic agents in each field have demonstrated the potential to create fundamentally new therapies for cancer patients. Our lead product candidate, CB-839, is an internally discovered, first-in-class inhibitor of glutaminase, a critical enzyme in tumor metabolism. We are currently evaluating CB-839 in three Phase 1 clinical trials in solid and hematological tumors. Our first program in tumor immunology, CB-1158, is directed at developing inhibitors of the enzyme arginase and is an orally bioavailable, first-in-class agent for this novel immuno-oncology target and is expected to enter clinical development in the first half of 2016. We also have a preclinical program in tumor metabolism which seeks to develop inhibitors of the enzyme hexokinase II, the first step in the breakdown of glucose, an essential nutrient in many cancer cells. Our ongoing research efforts are focused on discovering additional product candidates directed against novel tumor metabolism and immunology targets.

Recent Developments

CB-839 is a potent, selective, reversible and orally bioavailable inhibitor of human glutaminase. CB-839 binds to a unique site on glutaminase that is distinct from the site that binds glutamine, thereby reducing the potential for undesirable side effects due to inhibition of other enzymes and receptors that bind glutamine. In our preclinical studies, CB-839 has been shown to halt the growth of or kill cancer cells across a range of tumor types. The compound has demonstrated antitumor activity in several different tumor models in animals. In addition, CB-839 has shown strong synergy with immunomodulatory agents and several kinase inhibitors that target growth factor pathways. In preclinical toxicology studies, CB-839 was well tolerated in animals at doses above those shown to inhibit tumor growth. In December 2013, we submitted an IND application to the FDA to enable the initiation of three Phase 1 trials in patients with both solid and hematological tumors.

In February 2014, we initiated three Phase 1 clinical trials of CB-839 in patients with solid and hematological tumors. CX-839-001 is enrolling patients with solid tumors, CX-839-002 is enrolling patients with multiple myeloma or non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, and CX-839-003 is enrolling patients with acute myeloid or acute lymphocytic leukemia. The objectives of the Phase 1 clinical trials are to assess the safety and tolerability of CB-839. Each trial includes a dose escalation stage to identify the optimal dose for future clinical trials. This dose will be determined by the extent of glutaminase inhibition in blood and tumors, or by identifying a maximum tolerated dose. Each trial will also have an expansion stage in which additional patients with specific tumor types will be enrolled to further evaluate the safety of CB-839 and to seek preliminary evidence of

Table of Contents

efficacy. In addition to evaluating CB-839 as a single agent, we plan to enroll six Phase 1b combination cohorts, one in which CB-839 will be combined with paclitaxel in patients with triple-negative breast cancer, a second in which CB-839 will be combined with everolimus in renal cell cancer, a third in which CB-839 will be combined with erlotinib in non-small cell lung cancer, a fourth in which CB-839 will be combined with dexamethasone in patients with multiple myeloma, a fifth in which CB-839 will be combined with pomalidomide (marketed as Pomalyst) and dexamethasone in patients with multiple myeloma, and a sixth in which CB-839 will be combined with azacitidine in acute myelogenous leukemia. The goal of these cohorts is to evaluate the safety and potential utility of CB-839 when used in combination with these drugs. We expect hematologic Phase 1 clinical trial data by year-end 2015 and initial data from our combination trials to be available in 2016.

On November 8, 2015, solid tumor phase 1 data were presented at the American Association of Cancer Research-National Cancer Institute-European Organization for Research and Treatment of Cancer meeting in Boston, Massachusetts that demonstrated the clinical activity, tolerability and unique mechanism of action of CB-839 as a single agent in patients with solid tumors. Among efficacy-evaluable patients across a range of tumor types treated on the twice daily schedule of CB-839 administered with food, 22 of 50 patients (44%) had stable disease, or SD, or better lasting at least 3 cycles (63 days). Five stable disease patients currently on study have been treated with CB-839 for over 8 months without progression. This includes 2 patients with triple negative breast cancer, 1 renal cell carcinoma patient, 1 mesothelioma patient and 1 IDH1 mutant chondrosarcoma patient. In renal cell carcinoma, one patient has an ongoing partial response (PR; on study >5 months); this patient showed a 32% reduction in target lesions by RECIST with generalized shrinkage of lymph node metastases. Among the 15 evaluable patients with renal cell carcinoma, 9 (60%) had SD or PR, with four patients remaining on study.

We are currently evaluating a combination of CB-839 with the mTOR (mammalian target of rapamycin) inhibitor everolimus in the CX-839-001 Phase 1 study and additional combinations are anticipated in the near future with other approved agents, as described above. Data we presented at the American Association of Cancer Research in April 2015 demonstrated that signaling through mTOR is down-regulated by CB-839, highlighting a relationship between signal transduction pathways and cancer metabolism. This relationship is supported by data showing that CB-839 synergizes with everolimus in renal cell carcinoma lines. In addition, we showed that CB-839 has synergistic activity with the tyrosine kinase inhibitors sunitinib, sorafenib, and pazopanib, all of which are approved for the treatment of renal cell carcinoma.

We selected CB-1158 as our lead clinical candidate for our first immuno-oncology program targeting inhibition of arginase, a critical T-cell immunosuppressive enzyme produced by myeloid-derived suppressor cells in tumors. In November 2015, we presented data at the American Association of Cancer Research-National Cancer Institute-European Organization for Research and Treatment of Cancer meeting showing that CB-1158 is a highly selective, orally bioavailable, small molecule inhibitor of human arginase with nanomolar potency. Administration of CB-1158 to mice results in a dose-dependent increase in tumor arginine levels up to ~4-fold, consistent with target inhibition. Evaluation of anti-tumor efficacy in immunocompetent syngeneic mouse studies has shown that CB-1158 administered twice daily for 2-4 weeks results in significant inhibition of tumor growth. CB-1158 combines well with checkpoint inhibitors in syngeneic tumor studies, providing additional reduction in tumor growth and an increase in the CD8⁺ T-cell population in tumors with no evidence of additional toxicity. The compound has low clearance in mice, rats, dogs, and monkeys. Low clearance is predicted for CB-1158 in humans based on excellent stability in animal and human liver cells. Preclinical in vitro and in vivo data predict good oral bioavailability of CB-1158 in humans. Twice daily oral administration of CB-1158 to rats at 450 mg/kg (900 mg/kg/day) for 14 days resulted in no severe toxicity. We anticipate filing an investigational new drug application for CB-1158 in the first half of 2016.

Table of Contents

Risks Associated with our Business

Our business is subject to numerous risks and uncertainties, including those highlighted in the section titled **Risk Factors** immediately following this prospectus summary. These risks include, among others, the following:

We have incurred significant operating losses since our inception and anticipate that we will continue to incur substantial operating losses for the foreseeable future. We had an accumulated deficit of \$76.4 million as of September 30, 2015.

We will need substantial additional funding and may be unable to raise capital when needed, which would force us to delay, reduce or eliminate our product development programs or commercialization efforts.

Our approach to discovery and development of product candidates that target tumor metabolism and tumor immunology is unproven and may never lead to marketable products.

Clinical trials of our product candidates will be costly and time consuming, and if they fail to demonstrate safety and efficacy to the satisfaction of the FDA, or similar regulatory authorities, we will be unable to commercialize our product candidates.

If serious adverse effects or unexpected characteristics of our product candidates are identified during development, we may need to abandon or limit our development of some or all of our product candidates.

If we are unable to obtain sufficient intellectual property protection or protect our intellectual property rights, our business may be harmed.

Healthcare policy and regulatory oversight in the United States and internationally are subject to rapid change, and if we are unable to respond, our business may be harmed.

We face substantial competition from major pharmaceutical companies, specialty pharmaceutical companies and biotechnology companies worldwide.

If we are unable to adequately address these and other risks we face, our business, financial condition, operating results and prospects may be adversely affected.

In addition, we are an emerging growth company as defined in the Jumpstart Our Business Startups Act, or the JOBS Act, enacted in April 2012, and therefore we intend to take advantage of certain exemptions from various public company reporting requirements, including not being required to have our internal control over financial reporting audited by our independent registered public accounting firm pursuant to Section 404(b) of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002, reduced disclosure obligations regarding executive compensation in this prospectus, our periodic reports and proxy statement and exemptions from the requirements of holding a nonbinding advisory vote on executive

compensation and any golden parachute payments not previously approved. We may take advantage of these exemptions for up to five years or until we are no longer an emerging growth company.

Corporate Information

We were incorporated in Delaware in March 2010 as Protein Activation Therapeutics, Inc. and subsequently changed our name to Calithera Biosciences, Inc. Our headquarters are located at 343 Oyster Point Blvd., Suite 200, South San Francisco, California 94080, and our telephone number is (650) 870-1000. Our website address is www.calithera.com. The information contained on, or that can be accessed through, our website is not part of, and is not incorporated by reference into this prospectus and should not be considered to be part of this prospectus. Investors should not rely on any such information in deciding whether to purchase our common stock.

Table of Contents

Calithera, the Calithera logo and other trademarks or service marks of Calithera Biosciences, Inc. appearing in this prospectus are the property of Calithera Biosciences, Inc. Other trademarks, service marks or trade names appearing in this prospectus are the property of their respective owners. We do not intend our use or display of other companies trade names, trademarks or service marks to imply a relationship with, or endorsement or sponsorship of us by, these other companies.

The Shares of Common Stock We May Offer

We may offer shares of our common stock up to a total dollar amount of \$150,000,000, from time to time under this prospectus, together with the applicable prospectus supplement and any related free writing prospectus, at prices and on terms to be determined by market conditions at the time of any offering. Each time we offer shares of our common stock under this prospectus, we will provide a prospectus supplement that will describe the specific amounts, prices and other important terms of the offering.

The applicable prospectus supplement and any related free writing prospectus that we may authorize to be provided to you may also add, update or change any of the information contained in this prospectus or in the documents we have incorporated by reference. However, no prospectus supplement or free writing prospectus will offer any security other than shares of our common stock.

THIS PROSPECTUS MAY NOT BE USED TO CONSUMMATE A SALE OF SHARES OF OUR COMMON STOCK UNLESS IT IS ACCOMPANIED BY A PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT.

We may sell the shares of our common stock directly to investors or to or through agents, underwriters or dealers. We and our agents or underwriters, reserve the right to accept or reject all or part of any proposed purchase of shares of our common stock. If we do offer shares of our common stock to or through agents or underwriters, we will include in the applicable prospectus supplement:

the names of those agents or underwriters;

applicable fees, discounts and commissions to be paid to them;

details regarding over-allotment options, if any; and

the net proceeds to us.

We may issue shares of our common stock from time to time. The holders of our common stock are entitled to one vote for each share held of record on all matters submitted to a vote of stockholders. Subject to preferences that may be applicable to any outstanding shares of preferred stock, the holders of common stock are entitled to receive ratably such dividends as may be declared by our board of directors out of legally available funds. Upon our liquidation, dissolution or winding up, holders of our common stock are entitled to share ratably in all assets remaining after payment of liabilities and the liquidation preferences of any outstanding shares of preferred stock. Holders of common stock have no preemptive rights and no right to convert their common stock into any other securities. There are no redemption or sinking fund provisions applicable to our common stock. We urge you to read the applicable prospectus supplement (and any related free writing prospectus that we may authorize to be provided to you) related to any

common stock being offered.

Use of Proceeds

Except as described in any applicable prospectus supplement or in any free writing prospectuses we have authorized for use in connection with a specific offering, we currently intend to use the net proceeds from the sale of the shares of our common stock offered by us hereunder, if any, for working capital, capital expenditures and other general corporate purposes. See **Use of Proceeds** in this prospectus.

Table of Contents

NASDAQ Global Select Market Listing

Our common stock is listed on the NASDAQ Global Select Market under the symbol CALA. The applicable prospectus supplement will contain information, where applicable, as to other listings, if any, on the NASDAQ Global Select Market or other securities exchange of the shares of our common stock covered by the applicable prospectus supplement.

Table of Contents

RISK FACTORS

Investing in shares of our common stock involves a high degree of risk. Before deciding whether to invest in shares of our common stock, you should consider carefully the risks and uncertainties described under the section titled "Risk Factors" contained in the applicable prospectus supplement and any related free writing prospectus, and discussed under the section titled "Risk Factors" contained in our most recent Annual Report on Form 10-K and in our most recent Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q, as well as any amendments thereto reflected in subsequent filings with the SEC, which are incorporated by reference into this prospectus in their entirety, together with other information in this prospectus, the documents incorporated by reference and any free writing prospectus that we may authorize for use in connection with this offering. The risks described in these documents are not the only ones we face, but those that we consider to be material. There may be other unknown or unpredictable economic, business, competitive, regulatory or other factors that could have material adverse effects on our future results. Past financial performance may not be a reliable indicator of future performance, and historical trends should not be used to anticipate results or trends in future periods. If any of these risks actually occurs, our business, financial condition, results of operations or cash flow could be harmed. This could cause the trading price of our common stock to decline, resulting in a loss of all or part of your investment. Please also read carefully the section below titled "Special Note Regarding Forward-Looking Statements."

Table of Contents

SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

This prospectus and the documents we have filed with the SEC that are incorporated by reference contain forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, or the Securities Act, and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, or the Exchange Act. These statements relate to future events or to our future operating or financial performance and involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors which may cause our actual results, performance or achievements to be materially different from any future results, performances or achievements expressed or implied by the forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements may include, but are not limited to, statements about:

our ability to fund our working capital requirements;

our ability to obtain and maintain regulatory approval of our product candidates;

our ability to successfully commercialize our product candidates;

the rate and degree of market acceptance of our products that are approved;

our estimates of our expenses, ongoing losses, future revenue, capital requirements and our needs for or ability to obtain additional financing;

our expectation that our existing capital resources and the net proceeds from this offering will be sufficient to enable us to complete our planned clinical trials;

our ability to obtain and maintain intellectual property protection for our product candidates;

our ability to identify and develop new product candidates;

our ability to retain and recruit key personnel;

our use of proceeds from this offering;

our financial performance; and

developments and projections relating to our competitors or our industry.

These risks are not exhaustive. Other sections of this prospectus may include additional factors that could harm our business and financial performance. Moreover, we operate in a very competitive and rapidly changing environment. New risk factors emerge from time to time, and it is not possible for our management to predict all risk factors nor can we assess the impact of all factors on our business or the extent to which any factor, or combination of factors, may cause actual results to differ materially from those contained in, or implied by, any forward-looking statements.

All statements other than statements of historical facts contained in this prospectus, including statements regarding our future financial condition, business strategy and plans, and objectives of management for future operations, are forward-looking statements. In some cases, you can identify forward-looking statements by words such as anticipate, believe, continue, could, design, estimate, expect, intend, may, plan, potentially, predict, sho of these terms or other similar expressions. These statements reflect our current views with respect to future events and are based on assumptions and are subject to risks and uncertainties. Given these uncertainties, you should not place undue reliance on these forward-looking statements. We discuss in greater detail many of these risks under the section titled Risk Factors contained in the applicable prospectus supplement, in any free writing prospectuses we may authorize for use in connection with a specific offering, and in our most recent annual report on Form 10-K and in our most recent quarterly report on Form 10-Q, as well as any amendments thereto reflected in subsequent filings with the SEC, which are incorporated by reference into this prospectus in their entirety. Also, these forward-looking statements represent our estimates and assumptions only as of the date of the document containing the applicable statement. Unless required by law, we undertake no obligation to update or revise any forward-looking statements to reflect new information or future events or developments. You should read this prospectus, any applicable prospectus

Table of Contents

supplement, together with the documents we have filed with the SEC that are incorporated by reference and any free writing prospectus that we may authorize for use in connection with this offering completely and with the understanding that our actual future results may be materially different from what we expect. We qualify all of the forward-looking statements in the foregoing documents by these cautionary statements.

Table of Contents

USE OF PROCEEDS

Except as described in any applicable prospectus supplement or in any free writing prospectuses we have authorized for use in connection with a specific offering, we currently intend to use the net proceeds from this offering for working capital and general corporate purposes, which may include, among other things, funding research and development, clinical trials, vendor payables, potential regulatory submissions, hiring additional personnel and capital expenditures.

Table of Contents

DESCRIPTION OF CAPITAL STOCK

Our authorized capital stock consists of 200,000,000 shares of common stock, par value \$0.0001 per share, and 10,000,000 shares of preferred stock, par value \$0.0001 per share. The following is a summary of the rights of our common and preferred stock and some of the provisions of our amended and restated certificate of incorporation and amended and restated bylaws, an investor rights agreement between us and certain stockholders and Delaware General Corporation Law. This is only a summary, and is qualified in its entirety by reference to our certificate of incorporation, investor rights agreement and the bylaws.

Common Stock

Voting Rights

Each holder of common stock is entitled to one vote for each share on all matters submitted to a vote of the stockholders. The affirmative vote of holders of at least a majority of the voting power of all of the then-outstanding shares of capital stock, voting as a single class, is required to amend certain provisions of our amended and restated certificate of incorporation, including provisions relating to amending our amended and restated bylaws, the classified board, the size of our board, removal of directors, director liability, vacancies on our board, special meetings, stockholder notices, actions by written consent and exclusive jurisdiction.

Dividends

Subject to preferences that may apply to any outstanding preferred stock, holders of our common stock are entitled to receive ratably any dividends that our board of directors may declare out of funds legally available for that purpose on a non-cumulative basis.

Liquidation

In the event of our liquidation, dissolution or winding up, holders of our common stock are entitled to share ratably in all assets remaining after payment of liabilities and the liquidation preference of any outstanding preferred stock.

Rights and Preferences

Holders of our common stock have no preemptive, conversion, subscription or other rights, and there are no redemption or sinking fund provisions applicable to our common stock. The rights, preferences and privileges of the holders of our common stock are subject to and may be adversely affected by the rights of the holders of shares of any series of our preferred stock that we may designate in the future.

Preferred Stock

Our board of directors has the authority, without further action by our stockholders, to issue up to 10,000,000 shares of preferred stock in one or more series and to fix the number, rights, preferences, privileges and restrictions thereof. These rights, preferences and privileges could include dividend rights, conversion rights, voting rights, terms of redemption, liquidation preferences and sinking fund terms, and the number of shares constituting any series or the designation of such series, any or all of which may be greater than the rights of common stock. The issuance of our preferred stock could adversely affect the voting power of holders of common stock and the likelihood that such holders will receive dividend payments and payments upon liquidation. In addition, the issuance of preferred stock could have the effect of delaying, deferring or preventing a change of control or other corporate action. We have no

current plan to issue any shares of preferred stock.

Table of Contents

Stockholder Registration Rights

Certain holders of shares of our common stock, including certain holders of five percent of our capital stock and entities affiliated with certain of our directors, are entitled to certain rights with respect to registration of such shares under the Securities Act. These shares are referred to as registrable securities. The holders of these registrable securities possess registration rights pursuant to the terms of the investor rights agreement and are described in additional detail below.

The registration of shares of our common stock pursuant to the exercise of the registration rights described below would enable the holders to trade these shares without restriction under the Securities Act when the applicable registration statement is declared effective. We will pay the registration expenses, other than underwriting discounts, selling commissions and stock transfer taxes, of the shares registered pursuant to the demand, piggyback and Form S-3 registrations described below.

Generally, in an underwritten offering, the managing underwriter, if any, has the right, subject to specified conditions, to limit the number of shares the holders may include. The demand, piggyback and Form S-3 registration rights described below will expire three years after the effective date of the registration statement, of which this prospectus forms a part, or, with respect to any particular holder, at such time that such holder can sell its shares under Rule 144 of the Securities Act during any three-month period.

Demand Registration Rights

The holders of the registrable securities are entitled to certain demand registration rights. The holders of at least 60% of the registrable securities may make a written request that we register all or a portion of their shares, subject to certain specified exceptions. Such request for registration must cover securities the aggregate offering price of which, before payment of underwriting discounts and commissions, would exceed \$50,000,000.

Piggyback Registration Rights

In connection with the filing of the registration statement of which this prospectus forms a part, the holders of registrable securities were entitled to, and the necessary percentage of holders waived, their rights to include their shares of registrable securities in the registration statement of which this prospectus forms a part. If we propose to register for offer and sale any of our securities under the Securities Act in another offering, either for our own account or for the account of other security holders, the holders of these shares will be entitled to certain piggyback registration rights allowing them to include their shares in such registration, subject to certain marketing and other limitations. As a result, whenever we propose to file a registration statement under the Securities Act, including a registration statement on Form S-3 as discussed below, other than with respect to a demand registration or a registration statement on Forms S-4 or S-8 or related to stock issued upon conversion of debt securities, the holders of these shares are entitled to notice of the registration and have the right, subject to limitations that the underwriters may impose on the number of shares included in the registration, to include their shares in the registration.

Form S-3 Registration Rights

The holders of the registrable securities are entitled to certain Form S-3 registration rights. Any holder of these shares can make a request that we register for offer and sale their shares on Form S-3 if we are qualified to file a registration statement on Form S-3, subject to certain specified exceptions. Such request for registration on Form S-3 must cover securities the aggregate offering price of which, before payment of the underwriting discounts and commissions, equals or exceeds \$5,000,000. We will not be required to effect more than two registrations on Form S-3 within any

12 month period.

Table of Contents

Anti-Takeover Provisions of Delaware Law and Our Charter Documents

Section 203 of the Delaware General Corporation Law

We are subject to Section 203 of the Delaware General Corporation Law, which prohibits a Delaware corporation from engaging in any business combination with any interested stockholder for a period of three years after the date that such stockholder became an interested stockholder, with the following exceptions:

before such date, the board of directors of the corporation approved either the business combination or the transaction that resulted in the stockholder becoming an interested stockholder;

upon completion of the transaction that resulted in the stockholder becoming an interested stockholder, the interested stockholder owned at least 85% of the voting stock of the corporation outstanding at the time the transaction began, excluding for purposes of determining the voting stock outstanding (but not the outstanding voting stock owned by the interested stockholder) those shares owned (1) by persons who are directors and also officers and (2) employee stock plans in which employee participants do not have the right to determine confidentially whether shares held subject to the plan will be tendered in a tender or exchange offer; and

on or after such date, the business combination is approved by the board of directors and authorized at an annual or special meeting of the stockholders, and not by written consent, by the affirmative vote of at least 66 $\frac{2}{3}$ % of the outstanding voting stock that is not owned by the interested stockholder.

In general, Section 203 defines a business combination to include the following:

any merger or consolidation involving the corporation and the interested stockholder;

any sale, transfer, pledge or other disposition of 10% or more of the assets of the corporation involving the interested stockholder;

subject to certain exceptions, any transaction that results in the issuance or transfer by the corporation of any stock of the corporation to the interested stockholder;

any transaction involving the corporation that has the effect of increasing the proportionate share of the stock or any class or series of the corporation beneficially owned by the interested stockholder; and

the receipt by the interested stockholder of the benefit of any loans, advances, guarantees, pledges or other financial benefits by or through the corporation.

In general, Section 203 defines an interested stockholder as an entity or person who, together with the person's affiliates and associates, beneficially owns, or within three years prior to the time of determination of interested stockholder status owned, 15% or more of the outstanding voting stock of the corporation.

The statute could prohibit or delay mergers or other takeover or change in control attempts and, accordingly, may discourage attempts to acquire us even though such a transaction may offer our stockholders the opportunity to sell their stock at a price above the prevailing market price.

Amended and Restated Certificate of Incorporation and Amended and Restated Bylaws

Among other things, our amended and restated certificate of incorporation and amended and restated bylaws:

permit our board of directors to issue up to 10,000,000 shares of preferred stock, with any rights, preferences and privileges as they may designate, including the right to approve an acquisition or other change of control;

provide that the authorized number of directors may be changed only by resolution of our board of directors;

Table of Contents

provide that our board of directors will be classified into three classes of directors;

provide that, subject to the rights of any series of preferred stock to elect directors, directors may only be removed for cause, which removal may be effected, subject to any limitation imposed by law, by the holders of at least a majority of the voting power of all of our then-outstanding shares of the capital stock entitled to vote generally at an election of directors;

provide that all vacancies, including newly created directorships, may, except as otherwise required by law, be filled by the affirmative vote of a majority of directors then in office, even if less than a quorum;

require that any action to be taken by our stockholders must be effected at a duly called annual or special meeting of stockholders and not be taken by written consent or electronic transmission;

provide that stockholders seeking to present proposals before a meeting of stockholders or to nominate candidates for election as directors at a meeting of stockholders must provide advance notice in writing, and also specify requirements as to the form and content of a stockholder's notice;

provide that special meetings of our stockholders may be called only by the chairman of our board of directors, our chief executive officer or by our board of directors pursuant to a resolution adopted by a majority of the total number of authorized directors; and

not provide for cumulative voting rights, therefore allowing the holders of a majority of the shares of common stock entitled to vote in any election of directors to elect all of the directors standing for election, if they should so choose.

The amendment of any of these provisions would require approval by the holders of at least 66 ²/₃% of the voting power of all of our then-outstanding common stock entitled to vote generally in the election of directors, voting together as a single class.

The combination of these provisions will make it more difficult for our existing stockholders to replace our board of directors as well as for another party to obtain control of us by replacing our board of directors. Since our board of directors has the power to retain and discharge our officers, these provisions could also make it more difficult for existing stockholders or another party to effect a change in management. In addition, the authorization of undesignated preferred stock makes it possible for our board of directors to issue preferred stock with voting or other rights or preferences that could impede the success of any attempt to change our control.

These provisions are intended to enhance the likelihood of continued stability in the composition of our board of directors and its policies and to discourage coercive takeover practices and inadequate takeover bids. These provisions are also designed to reduce our vulnerability to hostile takeovers and to discourage certain tactics that may be used in proxy fights. However, such provisions could have the effect of discouraging others from making tender offers for our shares and may have the effect of delaying changes in our control or management. As a consequence, these provisions may also inhibit fluctuations in the market price of our stock that could result from actual or rumored takeover attempts. We believe that the benefits of these provisions, including increased protection of our potential ability to

negotiate with the proponent of an unfriendly or unsolicited proposal to acquire or restructure our company, outweigh the disadvantages of discouraging takeover proposals, because negotiation of takeover proposals could result in an improvement of their terms.

Choice of Forum

Our amended and restated certificate of incorporation provides that the Court of Chancery of the State of Delaware will be the exclusive forum for any derivative action or proceeding brought on our behalf; any action asserting a breach of fiduciary duty; any action asserting a claim against us arising pursuant to the Delaware General Corporation Law, our certificate of incorporation or our bylaws; or any action asserting a claim against us that is governed by the internal affairs doctrine. The enforceability of similar choice of forum provisions in

Table of Contents

other companies' certificates of incorporation has been challenged in legal proceedings, and it is possible that, in connection with one or more actions or proceedings described above, a court could find the choice of forum provisions contained in our certificate of incorporation to be inapplicable or unenforceable.

Listing

Our common stock is listed on the NASDAQ Global Select Market under the symbol CALA.

Transfer Agent and Registrar

The transfer agent and registrar for our common stock is American Stock Transfer & Trust Company, LLC. The transfer agent's address is 6201 1st Avenue, Brooklyn, New York 11219.

Table of Contents

PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION

We may sell the shares of our common stock from time to time pursuant to underwritten public offerings, direct sales to the public, negotiated transactions, block trades or a combination of these methods. We may sell the shares of our common stock to or through underwriters or dealers, through agents, or directly to one or more purchasers. We may distribute the shares from time to time in one or more transactions:

at a fixed price or prices, which may be changed;

at market prices prevailing at the time of sale;

at prices related to such prevailing market prices; or

at negotiated prices.

A prospectus supplement or supplements (and any related free writing prospectus that we may authorize to be provided to you) will describe the terms of the offering of the shares of our common stock, including, to the extent applicable:

the name or names of the underwriters, if any;

the purchase price of the shares of our common stock or other consideration therefor, and the proceeds, if any, we will receive from the sale;

any over-allotment options under which underwriters may purchase additional shares of our common stock from us;

any agency fees or underwriting discounts and other items constituting agents' or underwriters' compensation;

any public offering price;

any discounts or concessions allowed or reallocated or paid to dealers; and

any securities exchange or market on which the shares of our common stock may be listed.

Only underwriters named in the prospectus supplement will be underwriters of the shares of our common stock offered by the prospectus supplement.

If underwriters are used in the sale, they will acquire the shares of our common stock for their own account and may resell the shares of our common stock from time to time in one or more transactions at a fixed public offering price or at varying prices determined at the time of sale. The obligations of the underwriters to purchase the shares of our common stock will be subject to the conditions set forth in the applicable underwriting agreement. We may offer the shares of our common stock to the public through underwriting syndicates represented by managing underwriters or by underwriters without a syndicate. Subject to certain conditions, the underwriters will be obligated to purchase all of the shares of our common stock offered by the prospectus supplement, other than shares of our common stock covered by any over-allotment option. Any public offering price and any discounts or concessions allowed or reallocated or paid to dealers may change from time to time. We may use underwriters with whom we have a material relationship. We will describe in the prospectus supplement, naming the underwriter, the nature of any such relationship.

We may sell shares of our common stock directly or through agents we designate from time to time. We will name any agent involved in the offering and sale of shares of our common stock and we will describe any commissions we will pay the agent in the prospectus supplement. Unless the prospectus supplement states otherwise, our agent will act on a best-efforts basis for the period of its appointment.

We may authorize agents or underwriters to solicit offers by certain types of institutional investors to purchase shares of our common stock from us at the public offering price set forth in the prospectus supplement

Table of Contents

pursuant to delayed delivery contracts providing for payment and delivery on a specified date in the future. We will describe the conditions to these contracts and the commissions we must pay for solicitation of these contracts in the prospectus supplement.

We may provide agents and underwriters with indemnification against civil liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act, or contribution with respect to payments that the agents or underwriters may make with respect to these liabilities. Agents and underwriters may engage in transactions with, or perform services for us in the ordinary course of business.

Any underwriter may engage in over-allotment, stabilizing transactions, short-covering transactions and penalty bids in accordance with Regulation M under the Exchange Act. Over-allotment involves sales in excess of the offering size, which create a short position. Stabilizing transactions permit bids to purchase the underlying security so long as the stabilizing bids do not exceed a specified maximum price. Syndicate-covering or other short-covering transactions involve purchases of the shares of our common stock, either through exercise of the over-allotment option or in the open market after the distribution is completed, to cover short positions. Penalty bids permit the underwriters to reclaim a selling concession from a dealer when the shares of our common stock originally sold by the dealer are purchased in a stabilizing or covering transaction to cover short positions. Those activities may cause the price of the shares of our common stock to be higher than it would otherwise be. If commenced, the underwriters may discontinue any of the activities at any time.

Any underwriters or agents that are qualified market makers on the NASDAQ Global Select Market may engage in passive market making transactions in our common stock on the NASDAQ Global Select Market accordance with Regulation M under the Exchange Act, during the business day prior to the pricing of the offering, before the commencement of offers or sales of the common stock. Passive market makers must comply with applicable volume and price limitations and must be identified as passive market makers. In general, a passive market maker must display its bid at a price not in excess of the highest independent bid for such security; if all independent bids are lowered below the passive market maker's bid, however, the passive market maker's bid must then be lowered when certain purchase limits are exceeded. Passive market making may stabilize the market price of the shares of our common stock at a level above that which might otherwise prevail in the open market and, if commenced, may be discontinued at any time.

Table of Contents

LEGAL MATTERS

Cooley LLP, Palo Alto, California will pass upon the validity of the shares of common stock offered hereby. As of the date of this prospectus, GC&H Investments, LLC and GC&H Investments, entities comprised of partners and associates of Cooley LLP, beneficially own an aggregate of 8,917 shares of our common stock. Additional legal matters may be passed upon for us or any underwriters, dealers or agents, by counsel that we name in the applicable prospectus supplement.

EXPERTS

Ernst & Young LLP, independent registered public accounting firm, has audited our financial statements included in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2014, as set forth in their report, which is incorporated by reference in this prospectus and elsewhere in the registration statement. Our financial statements are incorporated by reference in reliance on Ernst & Young LLP's report, given on their authority as experts in accounting and auditing.

WHERE YOU CAN FIND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This prospectus is part of the registration statement on Form S-3 we filed with the SEC under the Securities Act and does not contain all the information set forth in the registration statement. Whenever a reference is made in this prospectus to any of our contracts, agreements or other documents, the reference may not be complete and you should refer to the exhibits that are a part of the registration statement or the exhibits to the reports or other documents incorporated by reference into this prospectus for a copy of such contract, agreement or other document. Because we are subject to the information and reporting requirements of the Exchange Act, we file annual, quarterly and current reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC. Our SEC filings are available to the public over the Internet at the SEC's website at <http://www.sec.gov>. You may also read and copy any document we file at the SEC's Public Reference Room at 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549. Please call the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330 for further information on the operation of the Public Reference Room.

INCORPORATION OF CERTAIN INFORMATION BY REFERENCE

The SEC allows us to incorporate by reference information from other documents that we file with it, which means that we can disclose important information to you by referring you to those documents. The information incorporated by reference is considered to be part of this prospectus. Information in this prospectus supersedes information incorporated by reference that we filed with the SEC prior to the date of this prospectus, while information that we file later with the SEC will automatically update and supersede the information in this prospectus. We incorporate by reference into this prospectus and the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part the information or documents listed below that we have filed with the SEC (Commission File No. 001-36644):

our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2014, filed with the SEC on March 27, 2015;

our Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended March 31, 2015, filed with the SEC on May 11, 2015.

Edgar Filing: Calithera Biosciences, Inc. - Form 424B5

our Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended June 30, 2015, filed with the SEC on August 10, 2015.

our Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended September 30, 2015, filed with the SEC on November 9, 2015.

Table of Contents

the information specifically incorporated by reference in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2014, from our definitive proxy statement relating to our 2015 annual meeting of stockholders, filed with the SEC on April 24, 2015;

our Current Reports on Form 8-K filed with the SEC on February 11, 2015, March 5, 2015, March 24, 2015, June 10, 2015 and September 30, 2015; and

the description of our common stock in our registration statement on Form 8-A filed with the SEC on September 25, 2014.

All filings filed by us pursuant to the Exchange Act after the date of the initial filing of the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part and prior to effectiveness of the registration statement shall be deemed to be incorporated by reference into this prospectus.

We also incorporate by reference any future filings (other than current reports furnished under Item 2.02 or Item 7.01 of Form 8-K and exhibits filed on such form that are related to such items unless such Form 8-K expressly provides to the contrary) made with the SEC pursuant to Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act, including those made after the date of the initial filing of the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part and prior to effectiveness of such registration statement, until we file a post-effective amendment that indicates the termination of the offering of the shares of our common stock made by this prospectus and will become a part of this prospectus from the date that such documents are filed with the SEC. Information in such future filings updates and supplements the information provided in this prospectus. Any statements in any such future filings will automatically be deemed to modify and supersede any information in any document we previously filed with the SEC that is incorporated or deemed to be incorporated herein by reference to the extent that statements in the later filed document modify or replace such earlier statements.

You can request a copy of these filings, at no cost, by writing or telephoning us at the following address or telephone number:

Calithera Biosciences, Inc.

343 Oyster Point Blvd. Suite 200

South San Francisco, California 94080

(650) 870-1000

Attn: Secretary

Table of Contents

1,720,430 Shares

Common Stock

PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT

January 30, 2017