

## **Mel Sorensen, MD, President and CEO of Ascenta Therapeutics, Speaks at Tokyo's Pharma Partnering Conference**

**SAN DIEGO, CA, April 5, 2005**

Mel Sorensen, MD, President and Chief Executive Officer of Ascenta Therapeutics, spoke at the Pharma Partnering Conference 2005, a annual meeting of Japanese pharmaceutical companies and promising public and private biopharmaceutical companies from around the world. The meeting was organized and sponsored by Atlas Venture, NIF Ventures and the Itochu Corporation. Dr. Sorensen gave an overview of Ascenta Therapeutics, its business model and approach to the highly challenging area of cancer clinical development. He shared a top-line view of the company's lead product, AT-101, and its pipeline. AT-101 is an orally bioavailable small molecule inhibitor of the Bcl-2 family of proteins. It is a derivative of a natural compound found in cottonseed. The company is sponsoring a Phase I clinical trial at the University of Alabama, the Mayo Clinic and at Georgia Cancer Specialists. Enrollment onto this trial began earlier this year. Preclinical research indicated that AT-101 acts through endogenous pathways to selectively induce apoptosis in tumor cells bearing one or more of the proteins in the Bcl-2 family. These proteins are often expressed on tumor cells, metastases, and other cells with chromosomal damage.

*Founded in 2003, Ascenta is a privately-held biopharmaceutical company that discovers and develops targeted new medicines for the treatment of cancer, and is headquartered in San Diego, CA. Ascenta's technology is focused on discovering molecules that hit vulnerable targets in endogenous apoptosis pathways and shut down cell growth and proliferation in cancer cells. Ascenta's broad pipeline of compounds is licensed from both the National Institutes of Health and the laboratory of Dr. Shaomeng Wang at the University of Michigan.*