



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ASCENTA THERAPEUTICS LICENSES CANCER DRUG CANDIDATES TO SANOFI-AVENTIS

A Global License and Research Collaboration Agreement on compounds designed to restore the p53 tumor suppressor function in cancer cells

MALVERN, PENNSYLVANIA – June 4, 2010 – Ascenta Therapeutics announced today the signing of a global collaboration and licensing agreement with sanofi-aventis (EURONEXT: SAN and NYSE: SNY) covering several early-stage agents being investigated for their potential to restore tumor cell apoptosis (programmed cell death). These orally-active, small-molecule drug candidates inhibit the interaction between HDM2 (Human Double Minute 2) and p53, removing a block to normal p53 tumor suppressor function and potentially enhancing cancer control and treatment.

Under the terms of the agreement, Ascenta Therapeutics has given sanofi-aventis an exclusive worldwide license to develop, manufacture, and commercialize all compounds issued from this program. In return, Ascenta will receive an upfront payment, as well as development, regulatory and commercial milestone payments that could reach a total of \$398 million. In addition, Ascenta is eligible to receive tiered royalties on worldwide product sales.

The agreement includes two agents that Ascenta Therapeutics previously in-licensed from the University of Michigan, MI-773 and MI-519-64, which should soon enter preclinical development. Both Ascenta Therapeutics and sanofi-aventis will continue to fund research on these targets at the University of Michigan, and Ascenta Therapeutics may participate in ongoing research activities and potential future clinical development.

“Ascenta’s mission since its founding has been to discover and develop novel small molecules that can trigger apoptosis in cancer cells. Sanofi-aventis has a great record of bringing innovative cancer therapies like these to cancer patients around the world,” said Mel Sorensen, MD, President and Chief Executive Officer of Ascenta Therapeutics. “Restoring tumor

suppressor function through the inhibition of the HDM2-p53 interaction offers the potential to control and prevent cancer progression. We are delighted to have sanofi-aventis join us and the University of Michigan in this endeavor to turn exciting science into novel cancer medicines.”

About HDM2/p53 Inhibition

Inhibiting the interaction between p53 and HDM2 (human double minute 2, and its murine counterpart, MDM2) is a very promising approach to restoring the natural tumor suppression function of the p53 protein. The p53 tumor suppressor is a principal mediator of growth arrest, senescence, and apoptosis in response to cellular damage. It is called the "guardian of the genome" because of its role in controlling the cell cycle and monitoring the integrity of the genome. HDM2 is the principal cellular antagonist of p53, acting to limit the p53 growth-suppressive function. Loss of p53 function is involved in 50 percent of cancers, either through mutation, overexpression or amplification of HDM2 in wild-type p53 tumors.

About sanofi-aventis

Sanofi-aventis, a leading global pharmaceutical company, discovers, develops and distributes therapeutic solutions to improve the lives of everyone. Sanofi-aventis is listed in Paris (EURONEXT: SAN) and in New York (NYSE: SNY). For more information, please visit: www.sanofi-aventis.com.

About Ascenta Therapeutics

Ascenta Therapeutics, Inc. is a privately-held, clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company dedicated to the discovery and development of new medicines to treat cancer. Ascenta's current focus is a portfolio of novel, orally active, small molecule drugs that restore the natural potential for cancer cells to undergo cell death (apoptosis). For additional information, please visit : www.ascenta.com.

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Media Contact:

Mike Beyer, Sam Brown Inc.

(773) 463-4211

beyer@sambrown.com