

## **AT-101, Ascenta's Oral Pan-Bcl-2 Inhibitor Ranked in Top Ten Leading Cancer Projects by Windhover Information, Inc**

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Ascenta Therapeutics lead clinical compound AT-101 has been chosen as one of the Top Ten Leading Cancer Projects in a survey of key oncologists conducted by the Windhover Information clinical advisory team. As companies focus more intently on programs to develop targeted compounds for the treatment of cancer, this emerging class of new drugs is garnering increased attention from clinicians and patients. As part of their survey of this new class of drugs, Windhover clinical advisors polled leading US oncologists to identify the most compelling of these current investigational oncology drug programs. This category includes Ascenta's AT-101 product.

Currently in Phase 2 trials for the treatment of chronic lymphocytic leukemia, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, and prostate cancer, AT-101 is the only orally bioavailable pan-Bcl-2 inhibitor under clinical investigation. AT-101 acts to trigger programmed cell death (apoptosis) of cancer cells by directly inhibiting the activity of Bcl-2, Bcl-XL and Mcl-1 - all proteins necessary for cancer cell survival.

As part of the conference series on this emerging class of new oncology drugs, Mel Sorensen, MD, President and CEO of Ascenta will present data highlighting recent clinical results with AT-101 at the Windhover Therapeutic Alliances Oncology Conference held June 6-7, 2006 in Atlanta, Georgia. This conference immediately follows the 2006 American Society for Clinical Oncology (ASCO) meeting.

"Ascenta is very pleased to have its lead product, AT-101, ranked in Windhover's Top Ten Cancer Projects List for 2006," said Dr. Sorensen. "As evidenced by several presentations at this year's ASCO meeting, small molecules are taking center stage in this exciting new era of more tolerable targeted therapies for cancer patients. Beyond single targets, oral agents also provide opportunities for more convenient and smarter drug combinations to shut down multiple abnormal biochemical pathways in cancer cells, especially with agents that directly target the apoptosis machinery of cancer cells. Ascenta's AT-101 and other compounds in our portfolio have been selected for development based on these attributes and we are encouraged by the early clinical data presented on AT-101 at ASCO earlier this week."

*Founded in 2003, Ascenta is a privately-held biopharmaceutical company that discovers and develops targeted new medicines for the treatment of cancer. The company has offices in San Diego, California and a preclinical research facility in Shanghai, China. Its 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.*