Ascenta AT-101 Data Presented at the American Society of Hematology 47th Annual Meeting and Exposition in Atlanta, Georgia

SAN DIEGO, CA, December 12, 2005

Ascenta Therapeutics Inc., a privately-held, clinical stage biopharmaceutical company today announced the presentation of four posters highlighting new data on AT-101, its lead compound currently in Phase II clinical trials for multiple cancer indications, at the American Society of Hematology annual meeting in Atlanta, Georgia.

AT-101 is the only orally bioavailable pan-Bcl-2 inhibitor currently under clinical investigation. With inhibitory activity against Bcl-2, Bcl-X_L and Mcl-1, AT-101 acts to trigger programmed cell death (apoptosis) of cancer cells, which commonly rely on these proteins to survive. Ascenta and collaborators presented posters highlighting AT-101's mechanism of action from four different sets of experiments.

Ascenta's collaborators from the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) and The Burnham Institute in La Jolla, California presented results demonstrating that AT-101 binds to proteins Bcl-2, Bcl-X_L, Mcl-1 and other proteins in the Bcl-2 family, and induces apoptosis in chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL) cells *in vitro*. view poster

A second presentation from UCSD showed data indicating that AT-101 has activity against primary culture CLL cells *in vitro*, either alone or in concert with rituximab. In these experiments, AT-101 was shown to induce apoptosis in CLL cells independent of commonly used CLL prognostic markers such as ZAP-70 expression or IgVH mutational status, suggesting CLL patients expressing a range of prognostic markers may be sensitive to this compound. view poster

Ascenta scientists and collaborators from the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York City and The Regina Elena Cancer Institute in Rome, Italy presented data on AT-101's activity in preclinical models of aggressive lymphoma. Their data demonstrated significant improvement in therapeutic efficacy when AT-101 was added to a regimen of cyclophosphamide and rituximab versus treatment with these two agents alone in animal models of aggressive lymphoma. view poster

The fourth presentation from collaborators at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota presented data on AT-101's activity in vitro on both cultured myeloma cell lines and primary cell cultures from multiple myeloma patients. These experiments demonstrated that AT-101 has significant *in vitro* activity on myeloma cells, including against cell lines resistant to anti-myeloma agents, and provide a rationale for use of AT-101 in early phase clinical trials for the treatment of myeloma patients either as a single agent or in concert with other active therapies. view poster

"These data, coupled with several presentations at the AACR-NCI-EORTC International Conference on Molecular Targets and Cancer Therapeutics in Philadelphia last month lend further support to evaluating AT-101 in conjunction with a variety of therapeutic regimens and malignancies", said Dr. Jon T. Holmlund, Chief Medical Officer and Vice President of Development at Ascenta.

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.