

## Press release

### **Debiopharm and Ascenta Therapeutics, Inc. announce an exclusive license agreement for the development and commercialization of the Inhibitor of Apoptosis Protein (IAP) Inhibitor AT-406 (called Debio 1143 by Debiopharm) for the treatment of various tumors**

Lausanne, Switzerland, and Malvern, PA, USA, September 7, 2011 - Debiopharm Group™ (Debiopharm), a global biopharmaceutical development specialist that focuses on serious medical conditions and particularly oncology, and Ascenta Therapeutics, Inc. (Ascenta), a privately-held, biopharmaceutical company dedicated to the discovery and development of new medicines to treat cancer, have entered into an exclusive worldwide license agreement concerning the development and commercialization of AT-406 (called Debio 1143 by Debiopharm) a small molecule IAP inhibitor currently in phase I development. By targeting inhibitors of apoptosis proteins, AT-406 (or Debio 1143) can induce cancer cell death and/or potentiate the efficacy of other treatment and is expected to be effective in the treatment of various cancers in combination with anti-cancer therapies.

“We are very excited about this collaboration with Ascenta Therapeutics. This company has an impressive scientific team and expertise in the field of apoptosis”, said Dr Rolland-Yves Mauvernay, president and founder of Debiopharm S.A., who added “it should be possible to combine AT-406 (or Debio 1143) with other pro-apoptotic agents, which can potentially bring huge benefits to patients by enhancing the efficiency of the treatment”.

“Ascenta is pleased to form this partnership with Debiopharm, a company that has demonstrated a commitment to and expertise in the development of medicines to help cancer patients”, noted Dr. Mel Sorensen, President and CEO of Ascenta.

#### **About AT-406**

AT-406 is an orally available small molecule that neutralizes major inhibitors of apoptosis. Apoptosis, or “programmed cell death,” is a precisely regulated, complex process ensuring that defective, damaged or superfluous cells are eliminated. Evasion of apoptosis is a hallmark of cancer, enabling cancer cells to live indefinitely and grow uncontrollably. Most current cancer therapies, including chemotherapeutic agents, radiation, and immunotherapy, work by inducing apoptosis. However, because of molecular alterations in the apoptotic pathways, many cancer cells are resistant or develop resistance to these agents. A promising new direction for drug development involves targeting apoptotic pathways directly to induce cell death and/or restore sensitivity to other treatments. AT-406 was discovered in the laboratory of Dr. Shaomeng Wang at the University of Michigan.

#### **About Debiopharm Group**

Debiopharm Group™ (Debiopharm) is a Swiss-based global biopharmaceutical group of companies with a focus on the development of prescription drugs that target unmet medical needs. The group in-licenses, develops and/or co-develops promising biological and small molecule drug candidates having reached clinical development phases I, II or III as well as earlier stage candidates. It develops its products for global registration and maximum commercial potential. The products are out-licensed to pharmaceutical partners for sales and marketing. Debiopharm Group is also active in the field of companion diagnostics with a view to progressing in the area of personalized medicine. Debiopharm independently funds the worldwide development of all of its products while providing expertise in pre-clinical and clinical trials, manufacturing, drug delivery and formulation, and regulatory affairs. For more information on Debiopharm Group™, please visit: [www.debiopharm.com](http://www.debiopharm.com)

#### **About Ascenta Therapeutics, Inc.**

Ascenta Therapeutics 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). Locust Walk Partners served as exclusive transaction advisor to Ascenta Therapeutics and Reed Smith LLP served as its legal counsel.

For additional information on Ascenta Therapeutics, please visit the company's website at [www.ascenta.com](http://www.ascenta.com).

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