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Indevus Jumps, Endo Slumps on Plans for \$637M Merger

By Donna Young
Washington Editor

Shares of Indevus Pharmaceuticals Inc. soared 73.6 percent Tuesday after the Lexington, Mass.-based company said it was being acquired by Endo Pharmaceuticals Holdings Inc. for \$4.50 per share, or about \$370 million in cash.

The deal also could include an additional \$267 million in cash for Indevus on achievement of certain milestones related to its hypogonadism drug candidate Nebido and octreotide, a product in development to treat acromegaly and carcinoid syndrome.

Shares of Indevus (NASDAQ:IDEV) closed at \$5.38, a gain of \$2.28.

Wall Street, however, reacted negatively to Endo, sending shares of the Chadds Ford, Pa.-based firm

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Financings Roundup

Partners, VCs Boost Anacor's Cash in \$50M Financing Round

By Jennifer Boggs
Assistant Managing Editor

Two weeks after officially withdrawing plans for an initial public offering, Anacor Pharmaceuticals Inc. padded its coffers with a \$50 million equity financing to support ongoing development of its boron chemistry-based pipeline.

The preferred stock financing included investments from the firm's two corporate partners, GlaxoSmithKline plc and Schering Corp. – included as part of the financing arrangements in both deals – as well as existing investors Rho Capital Partners, Venrock Associates, Care Capital and Aberdare Ventures. Following the offering, the combined ownership of GSK and Schering make up less than 20 percent of Anacor.

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Genmab Shares Slide on Interim Zalutumumab Data

By Cormac Sheridan
BioWorld Today Correspondent

Shares in Genmab A/S fall nearly 8 percent Tuesday following an interim update on a Phase III pivotal study of zalutumumab (HuMax-EGFr) in head and neck cancer.

The Copenhagen, Denmark-based company said the data it received at the halfway point did not fulfill criteria for an early halt on grounds of exceptional efficacy. That was sufficient to prompt a slide, as the share price had been boosted “by a growing expectation during the last three to six months that the study would be stopped at the interim stage,” analyst Mark Clark, of ING Wholesale in London, told *BioWorld Today*.

“Had it met the stop criteria at the interim stage, there would have been the possibility of doing a partnership deal this year,” he said. “We’re now back to the original

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NEW CO NEWS

Anaphore Gets \$25M Series A to Advance New Protein Class

By Trista Morrison
Staff Writer

Anaphore Inc. raised \$25 million in Series A financing to support preclinical development of its fully human trimeric proteins – dubbed Atrimers – for immune-mediated diseases and oncology.

Atrimers represent a “new product class in the protein therapeutics space,” Anaphore’s chief business officer, Bruce Steel, told *BioWorld Today*.

Katherine Bowdish, CEO of the La Jolla, Calif.-based start-up, explained that trimeric protein-based drugs have three binding domains, offering stronger and longer-lasting binding than monomeric and dimeric proteins. Addi-

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Anaphore

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tionally, Anaphore's trimeric protein therapeutics are smaller than antibodies, providing better tissue penetration, but larger than the other alternative protein scaffold approaches, placing them above the renal clearance threshold and allowing for a longer half-life.

Anaphore's TrimerX technology is the only protein engineering platform that can create fully human trimeric proteins, the company said. The platform uses engineered human tetranectin as its scaffold, a naturally secreted protein that is "tolerant to the immune system," Bowdish noted.

The alternative scaffold space has proven one of the more lucrative biotech endeavors over the past few years.

In 2006, Amgen Inc. acquired Avidia Inc. for \$400 million, gaining access to a platform for creating proteins that bind multiple targets. A few months later, GlaxoSmithKline plc paid \$454 million to acquire Domantis Ltd. and its small, dual-binding domain antibodies. The following year, Bristol-Myers Squibb Co. forked over \$430 million for Adnexus Therapeutics Inc. and its adnectins designed to trump the affinity and penetration of antibodies. (See *BioWorld Today*, Oct. 2, 2006, Dec. 11, 2006, and Sept. 25, 2007.)

Protein scaffolds have formed the foundation for profitable partnerships as well. Ablynx NV has used its Nanobody platform – which creates small proteins that may allow better penetration, binding, targeting and delivery than traditional antibodies – to snag partnerships with Novartis AG, Wyeth, Procter & Gamble, Boehringer Ingelheim GmbH and – most recently – Merck Serono. (See *BioWorld Today*, Sept. 5, 2008.)

Bowdish noted that Anaphore's Aptimers are "therapeutic area agnostic," providing plenty of partnership opportunities. She said the company plans to seek one or two strategic partners to collaborate on its internal oncology and immunology programs or to pursue new targets.

For now, Anaphore is focused on three undisclosed targets within the trimeric TNF superfamily – although Bowdish revealed TNF itself is not one of them. The company has identified lead candidates for two of the three targets and is advancing through preclinical studies.

The Series A financing should last about two years – possibly more depending on partnering activity, Bowdish said – enough time for Anaphore to develop lead candidates against four or five targets and possibly advance some into the clinic. 5AM Ventures, Versant Ventures and Apposite Capital led the Series A round. Steel said Anaphore anticipates adding one additional investor prior to closing the round in the first quarter.

The A round follows an \$8 million seed round provided by 5AM and Versant. 5AM founded Anaphore in December 2007 around technology licensed from Aarhus, Denmark-based Borean Pharma A/S. Borean had been founded by scientists at Denmark's University of Aarhus, but the company licensed its lead drug, Trimeric Apo A-I for atherosclerosis, to F. Hoffmann-La Roche Ltd.

5AM subsequently picked up rights to the platform technology and recruited Bowdish from Alexion Pharmaceuticals Inc. She previously had served as CEO of antibody engineering company Prolifaron Inc., a spinout of The Scripps Research Institute that Alexion acquired. (See *BioWorld Today*, Sept. 26, 2000.)

Anaphore's board is chaired by Andy Schwab, co-founder and managing partner of 5AM, and includes 5AM venture partner Richard Ulevitch, Versant managing director Brad Bolzon, Apposite principal Chris Hollowood and Steve Kaldor, president and CEO of Ambrx Inc., as well as Bowdish. ■

OTHER NEWS TO NOTE

- **Alfacell Corp.**, of Somerset, NJ., said a Nasdaq panel decided to delist the company's stock, effective Tuesday, due to noncompliance with the minimum market value for listed companies. Alfacell's securities are immediately eligible for quotation in the Pink Sheets under the ticker symbol "ACEL." The company may pursue listing on the Over-the-Counter Bulletin Board or request an additional Nasdaq review in the future.

- **Amira Pharmaceuticals Inc.**, of San Diego, said it successfully completed laboratory toxicity studies of AM211, the firm's internally discovered oral drug candidate for the treatment and control of inflammatory and allergic diseases linked to the arachidonic acid pathway, and is on target for submission of an investigational new drug application to the FDA by mid-2009. AM211 is an oral, selective antagonist of the receptor DP2, a high-affinity receptor for prostaglandin D2 and, in humans, is implicated in Th2-dependent allergic inflammation.

- **Antares Pharma Inc.**, of Ewing, NJ., received a milestone payment of \$450,000 from **BioSante Pharmaceuticals Inc.**, of Lincolnshire, Ill., related to an agreement with **Azur Pharma**, of Dublin, Ireland, for the marketing of Elestrin (estradiol gel) to treat moderate to severe hot flashes in menopausal women in the U.S. BioSante received \$3.325 million on signing with Azur, of which about \$1.5 million was purchased inventory. Antares is entitled to 25 percent of any up-front and milestone payments as well as a percentage of product royalties. Antares also announced that a new patent has been issued covering Elestrin (U.S. Patent 7,470,433) and is expected to expire on June 25, 2022.

- **ArGenis Pharmaceuticals LLC**, of Memphis, Tenn., said the European Committee for Orphan Medicinal Products recommended that ARG201 (native type 1 bovine collagen) receive orphan drug status in diffuse systemic sclerosis. Confirmation of that status is expected to be finalized by the European Commission early this year. Orphan designation provides development incentives and guarantees 10 years of marketing exclusivity in Europe upon approval. ARG201 is an immunotherapy designed to induce low-dose oral immune tolerance in patients with diffuse systemic sclerosis, causing down-regulation of the body's autoimmune response.