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## Press Release

### Antisense Pharma Receives U.S. Orphan Drug Status for its Brain Cancer Drug AP 12009

REGENSBURG, GERMANY - July 9th, 2002. The German biopharmaceutical company Antisense Pharma GmbH announced today that the Office of Orphan Products Development (OOPD) of the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has granted orphan drug designation for its TGF- $\beta$ 2 specific antisense oligodeoxynucleotide (AP 12009) in the treatment of malignant glioma, the most common and aggressive primary brain tumor in man. AP 12009 is the company's most advanced drug in clinical development, currently being studied in an European Phase I/II clinical trial.

"This designation is very gratifying for us, as it clearly supports our aim of developing novel treatments to effectively address unmet medical needs in underserved markets," said Dr. Gerhard Stauder, Chief Scientific Officer of Antisense Pharma.

The orphan drug program is intended to encourage research, development and approval of products that affect fewer than 200,000 patients in the United States. Orphan drug designation allows Antisense Pharma exclusive marketing rights for AP 12009 in the US for seven years following marketing approval by the FDA. The designation also enables Antisense Pharma to apply for clinical research funding, tax credits on clinical research and development expenses, potential waiver of user fees associated with filing of the marketing application as well as for assistance from the OOPD in guiding the drug through the regulatory approval process.

Malignant glioma (glioblastoma and anaplastic astrocytoma, WHO grades IV and III) is affecting approximately 20,000 patients in the United States. The current standard therapy schemes are not sufficient to improve significantly the survival time of the patients or the time to progression.

In March 2002 Antisense Pharma GmbH received orphan drug designation from the Commission of the European Communities for AP 12009. "The designations for both the EU and the US will help in the development process of AP 12009 and in significantly strengthening its market position in the future" said Dr. Reimar Schlingensiepen, Chief Operating Officer.

AP 12009 is a highly specific phosphorothioate antisense inhibitor of TGF- $\beta$ 2 production. TGF- $\beta$ 2 (transforming growth factor-beta 2) is the most potent immunosuppressor described to date. In a variety of cancers elevated plasma levels of TGF- $\beta$ 2 are correlated with malignancy, invasiveness, metastasis and poor clinical prognosis.

In clinical phase I/II studies with malignant glioma patients AP 12009 shows excellent safety and tolerability. Safety and first efficacy data have been presented at the 38th Annual Meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) in May 2002. Further development includes clinical phases II and III with multiple courses of AP 12009.

ANTISENSE PHARMA is a biopharmaceutical company located in Regensburg, Germany. The Company is exploiting its expertise in discovery research and product development to commercialize innovative antisense therapeutics for the treatment of cancer.

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*This press release contains forward-looking statements with respect to Antisense Pharma GmbH's business. By their nature, forward-looking statements and forecasts involve risks and uncertainties because they relate to events and depend on circumstances that will occur in the future. There are a number of factors that could cause actual results and developments to differ materially. Antisense Pharma GmbH disclaims any intent or obligation to update any of these forward-looking statements.*