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Press Release

Target Confirmation - Special conference devoted solely to Antisense Pharma`s central drug target TGF- β

(Regensburg, March 20th, 2003). The strategy of Antisense Pharma GmbH to focus on transforming growth factor beta (TGF- β) as a unique drug target and on phosphorothioate oligonucleotides (PTO) has impressively been confirmed at two recent conferences, the TGF- β conference of the American Association of Cancer Research (AACR) in San Diego and the SiRNA Design and Application conference in London.

The AACR conference "The TGF- β superfamily: Roles in the pathogenesis of cancer and other diseases" has highlighted the unique role of TGF- β for turning localized tumors into aggressive metastatic disease. The AACR conference on TGF- β has impressively demonstrated its key role in the malignancy of cancer by regulating four main pathomechanisms, i.e. tumor growth, angiogenesis, immunosuppression and metastasis. Antisense Pharma GmbH had realized this crucial role of TGF- β early on and has focused a large portion of its drug development program on the development of antisense-TGF- β inhibitors for the treatment of malignant forms of cancer. This has given the company a head-start before its competitors as reflected by the advanced stage of development: Its lead molecule AP 12009 is the most advanced anti-TGF- β compound for cancer treatment and has successfully passed phase I/II clinical studies as therapy for high-grade glioma. These studies not only revealed excellent safety and tolerability of AP 12009 but resulted in proof of concept efficacy data as well. A phase II study has been initiated.

The superiority of antisense PTO drugs as therapeutics has again been demonstrated at the recent SMi conference "Antisense and SiRNA technologies" in London. Compared to other approaches like SiRNA only PTOs are extensively validated in clinical applications.



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Characterized by their excellent balance of properties from good cellular uptake to favourable pharmacokinetics combined with an established and cost-effective manufacturing process PTOs take the lead in antisense and oligonucleotide therapeutics. Antisense Pharma GmbH has several PTO drug candidates in preclinical and clinical development. PTOs reveal excellent clinical results as exemplified by AP 12009: In his clinical trial update "Targeting cancer by reversing immunosuppression" Reimar Schlingensiepen, COO of Antisense Pharma GmbH not only pinpointed the potency of antisense-TGF- β drugs for the treatment of presently incurable cancer forms but also proved the potential of PTOs. Antisense Pharma GmbH is determined to further expand its leading position by extending the clinical use of antisense TGF- β inhibitors to other cancer indications.

Antisense Pharma GmbH is the leader in antisense drug development in Europe. The company focuses on the research and development of novel anticancer agents and aims to become a leading player in the market of therapeutics for treating malignant tumors.

For more information, please visit our web site at www.antisense-pharma.com

This press release contains forward-looking statements with respect to the future business of Antisense Pharma GmbH. By their nature, forward-looking statements and forecasts involve risks and uncertainties because they relate to events and depend on circumstances that could 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.