
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**Akebia Appoints Jason A. Amello as Senior Vice President, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer**

Cambridge, MA, and Cincinnati, OH, October 16, 2013 – Akebia Therapeutics, a leader in the development of hypoxia-inducible factor (HIF) inhibitors as therapeutic advances for patients with serious diseases, today announced that it has appointed Jason A. Amello as Senior Vice President, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer. Mr. Amello previously served as Executive Vice President, CFO and Treasurer of ZIOPHARM Oncology and as Senior Vice President, Corporate Controller and Chief Accounting Officer of Genzyme Corporation.

“Jason brings to Akebia over 20 years of industry and financial leadership, where he has played a vital role in the growth, profitability and operational performance of biotech companies,” said John P. Butler, CEO of Akebia. “On behalf of Akebia, I welcome Jason who will be instrumental to our team as we advance our portfolio of drug candidates, including AKB-6548, an oral small molecule currently in a Phase 2b study for the treatment of anemia associated with chronic kidney disease (CKD).”

“The anemia market is in great need of a safer treatment option, particularly in patients with additional complications such as CKD; and I believe AKB-6548 could provide that option by exploiting the body’s natural ability to increase red blood cell production,” commented Mr. Amello. “I am thrilled to join Akebia’s innovative team and look forward to realizing the full potential of this and other candidates in Akebia’s pipeline.”

During his time at ZIOPHARM, Mr. Amello implemented valuable changes across the organization, including contingency planning, governance and risk mitigation, and a restructuring. Previously, Mr. Amello had a significant tenure at Genzyme spanning 11 years where he served as Senior Vice President, Corporate Controller and Chief Accounting Officer; Vice President, Strategic Financial Services; and Senior Director of Finance, Assistant Corporate Controller. At Genzyme, Mr. Amello built a strong finance and accounting organization and created a new strategic advisory organization to support aggressive M&A activity that propelled Genzyme to one of the world’s most acquisitive biotechnology companies. Earlier in his career, Mr. Amello spent 10 years in the business advisory and assurance practice of Deloitte, serving in various roles of increasing responsibility through senior manager. Mr. Amello holds a bachelor’s degree from Boston College and is a Certified Public Accountant in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

About AKB-6548

AKB-6548 is an orally available, hypoxia-inducible factor prolyl hydroxylase (HIF-PH) inhibitor that stabilizes HIF2 α and is currently in development by Akebia for the treatment of anemias secondary to chronic kidney disease (CKD) and end stage renal disease (ESRD or dialysis). These diseases are currently treated with injectable erythropoiesis stimulating agents (ESAs), which generated approximately \$7 billion in global revenues in 2011, despite having “black box” warnings for increased cardiovascular risk

in patients with CKD and increased rate of tumor growth and chance of death in patients with cancer. By contrast, due to its different mechanism of action, AKB-6548 has demonstrated the potential to be a safer, more efficacious, less expensive, orally dosed alternative to the injectable ESAs that are currently used to treat a variety of anemias. Instead of binding directly to and saturating the erythropoietin (EPO) receptor for prolonged periods of time, AKB-6548 acts by stimulating the body's natural response to anemia that is carried out by stabilization of HIF2 α . The drug response is similar to the physiological adjustment made by the body to an increase in altitude. In this way, once-daily dosing of this oral HIF-PH inhibitor can restore the normal diurnal variation of EPO for a patient with anemia in a way that an injectable ESA cannot. This approach leads to a consistent, predictable and controllable rise in hemoglobin levels.

About Akebia Therapeutics

Akebia Therapeutics, Inc. is a leader in the development of hypoxia-inducible factor (HIF) inhibitors as therapeutic advances for patients with serious diseases. The Company's lead program, AKB-6548, is in a Phase 2b clinical trial for anemia associated with chronic kidney disease. AKB-6548 is an orally available, hypoxia-inducible factor prolyl hydroxylase (HIF-PH) inhibitor which is designed to stabilize HIF2 α , a critical regulator of red blood cell production and iron absorption. AKB-6548 potentially promises to be a safer, less expensive, orally dosed pharmaceutical to stimulate endogenous EPO production. www.akebia.com

Contact

Akebia Therapeutics

William Daly, Chief Business Officer, 513.985.1928, wdaly@akebia.com

MacDougall Biomedical Communications

Michelle Avery, 781.235.3060, mavery@macbiocom.com or

Christine Labaree, 650.339.7533, clabaree@macbiocom.com