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AbbVie and Voyager Therapeutics announce collaboration

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Voyager to receive $65 million upfront and up to $245 million in preclinical and Phase 1 option



AbbVie, biopharmaceutical company and Voyager Therapeutics, a clinical-stage gene therapy company focused on developing life-changing treatments for severe neurological diseases has announced an exclusive, global strategic collaboration and option agreement to develop and commercialize vectorized antibodies directed at pathological species of alpha-synuclein for the potential treatment of Parkinson's disease and other diseases (synucleinopathies) characterized by the abnormal accumulation of misfolded alpha-synuclein protein.

The delivery of sufficient quantities of antibodies across the blood-brain barrier is one of the major limitations of current biologic therapies for neurodegenerative diseases that require frequent systemic injections with large amounts of antibodies.

As per the company statement, “Voyager's vectorized antibody platform and approach aims to circumvent this limitation by delivering, with a potential, one-time intravenous administration, the genes that encode for the production of therapeutic antibodies utilizing Voyager's blood-brain barrier penetrant adeno-associated virus (AAV) capsids. This approach could result in the potential for higher levels of therapeutic antibodies in the brain compared with current systemic administration of antibodies.”

Jim Summers, Vice President, discovery neuroscience research, AbbVie said, "The expansion of AbbVie's partnership with Voyager represents the potential we see in the ability of its vectorized antibody platform to surpass the blood-brain barrier and more effectively deliver biologic therapies. We are hopeful that Voyager's technology will enable further development of transformative treatments for patients with neurodegenerative diseases."

Andre Turenne, president and chief executive officer of Voyager Therapeutics said, “Parkinson's disease is the second most common neurodegenerative disorder worldwide. A hallmark of Parkinson's disease is the accumulation of misfolded alpha-synuclein that can eventually lead to the formation of protein deposits and progressive neurodegeneration. Approaches to interfere with this process could potentially delay the progression of Parkinson's disease and other synucleinopathies including Lewy Body Dementia and multiple system atrophy.”

Under the terms of the collaboration and option agreement, Voyager will perform research and preclinical development work to vectorize antibodies directed against alpha-synuclein that are designated by AbbVie, after which AbbVie may select one or more vectorized antibodies to advance into IND-enabling studies and clinical development. Voyager will be responsible for the

research, IND-enabling and Phase 1 clinical activities and costs. Following completion of Phase 1 clinical development, AbbVie has an option to license the vectorized alpha-synuclein antibody program for further clinical development and global commercialization for indications including Parkinson's disease and other synucleinopathies.

Voyager will receive an upfront cash payment of $65 million and has the potential to earn up to $245 million in preclinical and Phase 1 option payments. Voyager is also eligible to receive up to an additional $728 million in potential development and regulatory milestone payments for each alpha-synuclein vectorized antibody compound.

Voyager is eligible to receive tiered royalties on the global commercial net sales of each alpha-synuclein vectorized antibody and may also earn up to a total of $500 million in commercial milestones.