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Bayer acquires AskBio to broaden innovation base in cell & gene therapy

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Bayer will own full rights to AskBio's gene therapy platform, including a broad intellectual property portfolio



Bayer AG has recently announced the acquisition of Asklepios BioPharmaceutical, Inc. (AskBio), a US-headquartered biopharmaceutical company specialized in the research, development and manufacturing of gene therapies across different therapeutic areas. AskBio's development portfolio includes investigational pre-clinical and clinical-stage candidates for the treatment of neuromuscular, central nervous system, cardiovascular and metabolic diseases.

German firm Bayer will own full rights to AskBio's gene therapy platform, including a broad intellectual property portfolio and an established contract development and manufacturing organization (CDMO) laying the foundation for future partnerships in the area of adeno-associated virus (AAV) therapies. The addition of AskBio to Bayer's emerging cell and gene therapy (CGT) business strengthens Bayer's commitment to the field.

Through the acquisition, Bayer will add an industry-leading adeno-associated virus (AAV)-based gene therapy platform to its portfolio, which has already demonstrated applicability across different therapeutic areas. Besides multiple clinical-stage assets for indications with high unmet need, the acquisition includes a state-of-the-art gene therapy technology platform as well as existing gene therapy manufacturing platform.

Gene therapy offers new treatment options for many currently untreatable diseases, particularly genetic diseases caused by a single genetic defect.

AskBio's gene therapy platform includes an industry-leading cell line manufacturing process and an extensive AAV capsid and promoter library. AskBio will continue to operate as an independent company on an arms-length basis. Bayer's newly established CGT unit will bundle Bayer's activities in this area moving forward in order to establish an innovation ecosystem for the participating partners within the Bayer organization.