



## **Abgenix To Proceed With Phase IIb Study Of ABX-IL8 In Psoriasis**

### **- Primary Objectives Met in Preliminary Analysis of Phase IIa Study -**

FREMONT, Calif. – January 3, 2001 – Abgenix, Inc. (Nasdaq: ABGX) announced today the decision to proceed with a Phase IIb clinical trial of ABX-IL8 in patients with moderate-to-severe psoriasis. The decision to move forward is based on meeting pre-determined safety and efficacy criteria in an interim analysis of an ongoing Phase IIa study. The company intends to present the Phase IIa results in detail at the American Academy of Dermatology meeting in March 2001. Abgenix plans to initiate the Phase IIb trial in the first quarter of 2001.

"Abgenix is encouraged by the preliminary data from the Phase IIa trial in psoriasis and looks forward to performing the next study," stated R. Scott Greer, chairman and chief executive officer of Abgenix. "ABX-IL8 is the first fully human antibody created using our XenoMouse™ technology, to enter clinical testing. We are delighted by the clinical progress achieved with this therapeutic candidate thus far, and plan to explore its utility in several clinical indications."

The Phase IIa trial was a double-blind, placebo-controlled study designed to evaluate the safety and preliminary efficacy of ABX-IL8 in moderate-to-severe plaque psoriasis. It involved 100 patients at 20 sites in the U.S. receiving one of two dose levels of ABX-IL8 or placebo. Study medication was administered once every 3 weeks for five consecutive doses, followed by a 24-week observation period.

The Phase IIb trial is designed to confirm the safety and efficacy of ABX-IL8 and to determine the optimal dose. It will enroll 225 patients with moderate-to-severe psoriasis who will be randomized to receive one of two dose levels of ABX-IL8 or placebo. Treatment frequency and duration will be the same as in the Phase IIa study. Efficacy analyses will include Psoriasis Area Severity Index (PASI) scores and Physician Global Assessment (PGA), which are standard measures of severity of psoriasis.

ABX-IL8 is a fully human monoclonal antibody that targets interleukin-8 (IL-8), a chemokine involved in the inflammatory process by first enabling immune cells, including neutrophils, to migrate to sites of inflammation and subsequently activating them. Clinical data suggest that excess of IL-8 may be associated with certain inflammatory disorders including psoriasis, rheumatoid arthritis and pulmonary disorders.

Abgenix is testing ABX-IL8 in psoriasis because of its potential to intervene at multiple steps in the disease pathology by blocking IL-8. Scientific studies have shown that IL-8 levels can be elevated 150-fold in psoriatic tissue when compared to normal tissue. In addition to contributing to the inflammation process, IL-8 is also a growth factor for skin cells that are proliferating in psoriatic tissue. Finally, IL-8 is a potent angiogenesis factor and may be contributing to the formation of new blood vessels that are found in psoriatic lesions.

In addition to psoriasis, Abgenix is concurrently conducting a Phase IIa clinical trial of ABX-IL8 in patients with rheumatoid arthritis.

Psoriasis is a chronic disease that results in plaques, a thickening and scaling of the skin accompanied by local inflammation. The disease affects approximately four to five million people in the United States and can be debilitating in its most severe form. Approximately 500,000 psoriasis patients suffer from a severe enough form of the disease to require systemic therapy with immune suppressants and ultraviolet phototherapy. The risk of serious adverse side effects associated with these therapies often requires the patients to alternate between various therapeutic modalities as a precautionary measure.

Abgenix is a biopharmaceutical company focused on the development and commercialization of antibody therapies for a variety of diseases. The company developed XenoMouse™ technology to enable the rapid generation of high affinity, fully human antibody product candidates to essentially any disease target appropriate for antibody therapy. Abgenix uses its XenoMouse technology to build a large and diversified product portfolio through the establishment of licensing arrangements with multiple pharmaceutical, biotechnology and genomics companies and through the development of its own internal proprietary products. For more information on Abgenix, visit the company's website at [www.abgenix.com](http://www.abgenix.com).

*Statements made in this press release about Abgenix's XenoMouse technology, product development activities and collaborative arrangements other than statements of historical fact, are forward looking statements and are subject to a number of uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from the statements made, including risks associated with the success of clinical trials, the progress of research and product development programs, the regulatory approval process, competitive products, future capital requirements and the extent and breadth of Abgenix's patent portfolio. Please see Abgenix's public filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission for information about risks that may affect Abgenix.*

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