



**Escient Pharmaceuticals Raises \$77.5 Million Series B Round and Initiates a Phase 1/1b Clinical Trial of EP547, a MRGPR-targeted Therapy to Treat Cholestatic and Uremic Pruritis**

- Proceeds support clinical development for lead program in cholestatic and uremic pruritis and second program for mast cell-related diseases*
- Financing round led by Sanofi Ventures and Cowen Healthcare Investments and included new investors Redmile Group and Perceptive Advisors*
- Jason Hafler, Ph.D., of Sanofi Ventures and Kevin Raidy of Cowen Healthcare Investments join Escient board of directors*

San Diego, CA – September 14, 2020 – Escient Pharmaceuticals, Inc., an industry-leading company developing Mas-related G Protein-Coupled Receptor (MRGPR)-targeted drugs to address serious, underserved medical needs across a broad range of therapeutic indications, today announced the completion of a \$77.5 million Series B financing and the initiation of a Phase 1/1b clinical trial of EP547, a MRGPRX4-targeted product candidate to treat cholestatic and uremic pruritis. The round was led by Sanofi Ventures and Cowen Healthcare Investments (CHI) with participation by new investors Redmile Group and Perceptive Advisors. All of the company’s existing investors, including The Column Group, 5AM Ventures, and Osage University Partners, participated in the round. Escient discovered and is developing EP547 based on the novel finding of disease-related accumulation of key metabolites that specifically activate the MRGPRX4 itch receptor and will use these proceeds to support clinical development. The company is developing a portfolio of MRGPR-focused therapeutics including a second program targeting mast cell-based MRGPRX2 that is anticipated to play a role in a number of indications in various therapeutic areas.

“In just over two years since our launch, we’ve made significant progress developing our platform and pipeline. We have advanced both our understanding of the role MRGPRs in a number of therapeutic areas and our methods for drugging them to potentially treat several diseases based on novel and specific mechanisms of action,” said Alain Baron, M.D., Chief Executive Officer of Escient. “Through our work, we’ve identified promising drug candidates that we are advancing into clinical development with the potential to build a pipeline of class-leading, once-daily, oral therapeutics to address debilitating diseases.”

Effective treatments for severe pruritus associated with cholestasis and uremia are sorely needed. Drug development to address pruritus in these conditions has been hampered by the lack of basic biological knowledge of their specific mechanisms. Cholestasis occurs in chronic adult and pediatric conditions wherein 30-100% of patients experience moderate-to-severe itch. Hemodialysis and end-stage renal disease are largely adult conditions with up to 55% of the population experiencing itch.

“Current treatment options for cholestatic and uremic pruritis are non-specific, largely ineffective, and have significant side effects,” said Marcus F. Boehm, Ph.D., Chief Scientific Officer of Escient. “Based on

our preclinical discoveries, we believe we have the opportunity to develop a mechanism-based, well-tolerated, rapidly-acting and highly effective novel therapy for these patients with the potential to make a significant difference in their lives.”

The Phase 1/1b trial of EP547 is a randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled study to evaluate the safety, tolerability, and pharmacokinetics of single and multiple ascending doses of EP547 in healthy subjects and subjects with cholestatic or uremic pruritus.

In conjunction with the financing, Jason Hafler, Ph.D., of Sanofi Ventures and Kevin Raidy of CHI have joined Escient’s board of directors.

**About Escient Pharmaceuticals**

Escient Pharmaceuticals is a biotechnology company that is advancing first-in-class G Protein-Coupled Receptor (GPCR)-targeted drugs to address serious, unserved medical needs across a broad range of therapeutic indications. Focused on unleashing the therapeutic potential of specific orphan GPCRs, including the novel family of Mas-Related G-Protein Receptors (MRGPRs), Escient’s lead program targets MRGPRX4. Based in San Diego, Calif., Escient is led by an experienced team of biotechnology entrepreneurs with specific expertise in GPCR drug discovery and development, and funded by top-tier life science investors, including The Column Group, 5AM Ventures, Osage University Partners and Altitude Life Science Ventures. Visit [www.escientpharma.com](http://www.escientpharma.com) to learn more.

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