

Ascend acquires GMP manufacturing capacity in Alachua, Florida; Enters long-term partnership with Beacon Therapeutics for clinical and commercial AAV production

London, United Kingdom, 9 April 2024 – [Ascend Advanced Therapies](#) (Ascend), an end-to-end gene therapy development partner, has acquired the Chemistry, Manufacturing and Controls (CMC) team and site in Alachua, Florida from [Beacon Therapeutics](#) (Beacon). The transaction brings an operational good manufacturing practice (GMP) facility, process and analytical development capabilities, and additional experts to the Ascend team. It also includes a long-term partnership with Beacon to continue manufacturing its products for clinical and commercial use, securing product supply for Beacon, and enabling it to focus on clinical development.

“Ascend was founded with a unique science and technology-driven strategy. As we continue building the most flexible adeno-associated virus (AAV) platform across serotypes on the market, we also understand the critical value of our experienced employees,” Mike Stella, CEO at Ascend offered. “This acquisition allows us to now support customers from research through to commercialization and adds to one of the most experienced gene therapy teams in the market. Every day we are working together to grow the company with a long-term mindset of quality first to appropriately balance quality and yield for the life of each product.”

“We are excited to enter this strategic arrangement with Ascend to advance our sight saving therapies toward approval. This alignment is critical to securing GMP drug product supply for our late-stage clinical asset [AGTC-501 for the treatment of X-Linked Retinitis Pigmentosa](#),” David Fellows, CEO at Beacon Therapeutics continued. “The Ascend team brings significant experience in gene therapy manufacturing and a strong commitment to building capabilities to support future Beacon pipeline programs.”

The Beacon Therapeutics portfolio currently includes three ocular gene therapy products utilizing AAV to deliver gene constructs that address retinal disorders. The proteins expressed from the transduced constructs compensate for deficiencies in the patient cells, or otherwise intervene in pathological processes, potentially restoring vision or preventing disease progression.

Alachua is a leading biotech hub in Florida and continues to attract investments in advanced therapeutic programs. The facility is highly synergistic to a growing global network of Ascend sites that has been built via critical acquisitions. From early-stage R&D at the San Francisco Bay Area site, to process development, optimisation and forthcoming GMP QC release capabilities at the Munich, Germany site and now the GMP facility in Alachua Florida, Ascend has the combined network and product experience to deliver total support for clients at all stages of development.

The transaction was closed on 1st April 2024, and integration efforts began immediately. To learn more about Beacon Therapeutics, please visit: <https://www.beacontx.com/>. To learn more about Ascend, please visit: www.ascend-adv.com or email business@ascend-adv.com.

About Ascend

Ascend Advanced Therapies (Ascend) is a specialist adeno-associated virus (AAV) development partner working to bring next-generation gene therapy products to market. Using

an acqui-building approach, Ascend hit the ground running in 2023 with operational facilities globally, and a team of experts that offer unparalleled insight and collaboration when delivering products from the bench through to commercialization. The flexible platform supports all AAV serotypes across scales with proprietary and partnered technologies and a world-class analytical toolkit. The team continuously aims higher for the long run when collaborating with partners to balance yield and quality of accessible life-saving therapies. Learn more at www.ascend-adv.com.

About Beacon Therapeutics

Beacon Therapeutics is an ophthalmic gene therapy company founded in 2023 to save and restore the vision of patients with a range of prevalent and rare retinal diseases that result in blindness. Beacon has an established scientific foundation that combines a late-stage development candidate to treat X-linked retinitis pigmentosa (XLRP), as well as two preclinical programs, one targeting dry age-related macular degeneration (AMD) and another targeting cone-rod dystrophy (CRD), an inherited retinal disease. The Company is supported by funds from Syncona and additional investors including Oxford Science Enterprises. To learn more, please visit www.beacontx.com.

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