



## Versantis Raises CHF 4.4 Million in Series A Financing to Advance New Generation of Liver Disease Medicines

Funding brings resources to advance lead candidate VS-01 to first-in-human study and transform the care of patients with rare and life-threatening liver diseases.

**Zurich, Switzerland, March 29<sup>th</sup> 2017** – Versantis, a pharmaceutical company focused on the development of products addressing a high unmet medical need in the diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of liver diseases, today announces the closing of a Series A financing round of CHF 4.4 million (USD 4.4 million). Redalpine Venture Partners led the round and was joined by Altus Partners, HealthEquity, Occident Group, Zürcher Kantonalbank, and private investors. The proceeds will be used to progress the lead candidate, VS-01, into a Phase I/II clinical trial targeting hepatic encephalopathy in acute on chronic-liver-failure, as well as to further develop the company's preclinical pipeline.

"We are thrilled to welcome an outstanding consortium of investors in our Series A financing who will not only bring capital resources, but also compelling visions and complementary experiences which will continue to drive execution and craft innovative strategies to advance our products' pipeline. The timing of this financing is excellent and puts Versantis in a competitive position to rapidly access the growing multi-billion-dollar market of liver diseases." said Dr. Vincent Forster, CEO and co-founder of Versantis. "This is an exciting time for Versantis as we advance the development of our lead compound VS-01 to reach Phase IIa and deliver proof-of-safety and preliminary proof-of-efficacy in the clinic; this will represent a major milestone which will serve as a common basis for 3 different indications in acute liver failure." added Dr. Meriam Kabbaj, COO and co-founder of Versantis.

Versantis' board of Directors is chaired by Peter Nicklin, senior healthcare executive with extensive international experience (Baxter, Bayer Healthcare, Novartis). In conjunction with the financing, Michael Sidler, Redalpine, and Lluís Pareras, HealthEquity, will join the founding board members Drs. Kabbaj and Forster.

"It was the entrepreneurial quality of the founding team, the solid science and the combination of a medtech product with a drug-like potential that convinced us to lead this investment round." stated Dr. Sidler, Redalpine. "We believe in Versantis' innovative pipeline that carries a big hope for treating the patients suffering from acute liver diseases." added Altus Partners.

Dr. Pareras from HealthEquity said: "We are confident that Versantis can further build on the positive results for VS-01 generated to date and we are committed to progressing Versantis' candidate rapidly to first-in-man to provide an option for the treatment of hepatic encephalopathy. Its strong preclinical results and novel mechanism of action, developed by Dr. Vincent Forster and Dr. Meriam Kabbaj, convinced us of the value of the research. We are excited to understand more about the potential for this therapy to benefit patients afflicted with liver diseases."

### **About acute liver diseases**

Acute-on-Chronic Liver Failure (ACLF) and Acute Liver Failure (ALF) are rare diseases characterized by an acute decompensation of the liver supplemented by hepatic encephalopathy, a neuropsychiatric condition rapidly progressing into coma and death. These indications represent about 120'000 patients yearly in the EU and USA and continue to increase due to the aging population, and a higher prevalence of diabetes, obesity, alcohol, and drug intoxications. Pediatric patients suffering from congenital Urea Cycle Disorders (UCD) represent a third indication for VS-01 which has the potential to be the first tailored lifesaving therapy meeting the specific needs of this population.

### **About Redalpine Venture Partners**

Redalpine Venture Partners is an early stage investor focusing on disruptive and highly scalable business models. Their aim is to help talented entrepreneurs turn their visions into reality. To foster entrepreneurial success, Redalpine provides financial backing as well as relevant know-how and a reliable network. Redalpine focuses on European Life-Science and ICT start-ups.

### **About APBMTI**

Altus Partners BioMed Tech Innovations AG is an investment holding company seated in Basel, Switzerland. APBMTI is committed for healthcare excellence by promoting biomedical innovations into clinical practice.

### **About HealthEquity**

HealthEquity is a Spanish venture capital firm investing in early-stage companies in the healthcare sector, with a special focus on biotechnology and medical devices. Founded by the Barcelona Medical Association and the financial group Riva y Garcia, HealthEquity is looking for projects to bring successful innovative life science companies to the marketplace and to foster the Catalan and Spanish biotech ecosystem.

### **About Occident Group**

Founded in 1993, Occident Group is an international, privately held investment company based in Zug. Occident Group currently holds more than 50 investments in venture capital, real estate development, investment properties and real assets. A strong forward-looking approach is key to Occident Group's investment philosophy, thus the focus with startup companies is on promising innovations and highly motivated entrepreneurs with the drive for excellence and sustainable success. Occident Group acts as long-term investor and contributes more than just financial support.

### **About Versantis**

Versantis is a Swiss pharmaceutical company, Spin-off of ETH Zurich, developing breakthrough liver disease medicines and diagnostics addressing high unmet medical needs. Its lead candidate, VS-01, is currently at preclinical stage and has the potential to be the first drug for acute liver disease simultaneously supporting multiple failing organs. VS-01 targets 3 rare indications and received an Orphan Drug Designation in ALF. In addition, Versantis' pipeline promises to improve patients' outcome in other medical fields; VS-02 and VS-03 are developed for chronic liver diseases and for the treatment of drug intoxications, both representing large market opportunities and significant upsides for Versantis.

### **Contact**

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