Lpath Granted 22nd Patent Related to Lipidomics-Based Drug Development Program

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SAN DIEGO, CA, Jun 09, 2011 (MARKETWIRE via COMTEX) -- Lpath, Inc. (OTCBB: LPTN), the industry leader in lipidomics-based therapeutics, received official notification from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) that Lpath has been issued a key patent to add to its expanding patent portfolio, which has grown now by six patents over the last six months.

This newly issued patent, No. US 7,956,173, claims composition of matter related to sonepcizumab, the drug substance in Lpath's two lead compounds, iSONEP(TM) and ASONEP(TM). Sonepcizumab is an antibody that binds to and inhibits sphingosine-1-phosphate (S1P), a bioactive lipid that has been validated as a target in multiple disease states.

Specifically, this patent claims nucleic acids encoding heavy and light chains of antibodies to S1P, as well as engineered plasmids and host cells designed to express a humanized monoclonal antibody to S1P. This new patent adds to a recently-awarded patent (US 7,829,674) that has additional claims covering the composition of matter for this anti-S1P antibody.

iSONEP and ASONEP are different formulations of a first-in-class therapeutic antibody developed by Lpath's ImmuneY2(TM) drug-discovery engine. Antibodies developed via this discovery engine are designed to target bioactive signaling lipids, such as S1P, that are involved in the proliferation and spread of cancer, age-related macular degeneration (AMD), inflammatory and auto-immune disorders, and many other diseases.

Lpath recently completed two early-stage clinical trials using the two anti-S1P antibody formulations: iSONEP was evaluated in a Phase I trial in wet-AMD subjects and ASONEP

was evaluated in a Phase I trial in cancer subjects.

Lpath will soon initiate two iSONEP Phase II trials: the PEDigree Study will evaluate the safety and efficacy of iSONEP in patients with RPE Detachment (PED), for which there is no approved drug, and the Nexus Study will evaluate the safety and efficacy in the broader wet-AMD population. Lpath entered into an agreement with Pfizer (NYSE: PFE) in 2010 that provides Pfizer an exclusive option for a worldwide license to develop and commercialize iSONEP. Lpath is also independently pursuing two ASONEP Phase II trials in two distinct cancer indications.

According to Laurel Bernstein, Lpath's executive director of intellectual property, "Lpath has built an extensive matrix of coverage in the field of antibodies to biological lipids, including S1P. This matrix now includes issued claims to the plasmids and cells used to produce our lead antibody compound, sonepcizumab."

About Lpath's Patent Portfolio Over the course of the company's development, Lpath has achieved a broad and deep intellectual-property position in the bioactive-lipid arena. The company's comprehensive patent portfolio now includes 22 issued patents (including five international) and 104 patent applications (including 70 international). These patents primarily concern the use of reagents and methods designed to interfere with the actions of bioactive lipids involved in human disease. Lpath's intellectual-property portfolio includes compositions of matter that specifically bind to sphingolipids and sphingolipid metabolites. These agents, including antibodies, could be used in the diagnosis and treatment of various diseases and disorders, including cardiovascular and cerebrovascular disease, cancer, inflammation, autoimmune disorders, ocular disease, and angiogenesis.

Lpath has also obtained issued claims on sphingolipid targets (e.g., receptors and signaling sphingolipids) and methods for using such targets in drug-discovery screening efforts.

The company believes that its patent estate provides broad, commercially significant coverage of antibodies, receptors, enzymes, or other moieties that bind to a lysolipid (or a sphingolipid metabolite) for diagnostic, therapeutic, or screening purposes.

About Lpath San Diego-based Lpath, a therapeutic antibody company, is the category leader in lipidomics-based therapeutics, an emerging field of medicine that targets bioactive signaling lipids for treating a wide range of human disease. Lpath's ImmuneY2(TM) drug-discovery engine has the unique ability to generate therapeutic antibodies that bind to and inhibit bioactive lipids that contribute to disease. The

company has developed three drug candidates, two of which -- iSONEP(TM) for wet AMD and ASONEP(TM) for cancer -- will soon begin Phase 2 clinical trials. For more information, visit www.Lpath.com.

About Forward-Looking Statements The Company cautions you that the statements included in this press release that are not a description of historical facts are forward-looking statements. These include statements regarding: the protection against competition afforded by issued patents; the eventual commercial viability of the Company's drug programs; and the Company's ability to complete additional discovery and development activities for drug candidates utilizing its proprietary ImmuneY2 drug discovery process. Actual results may differ materially from those set forth in this press release due to the risks and uncertainties inherent in the Company's business, including, without limitation: the results of any future clinical trials for iSONEP or ASONEP may not be favorable, and the Company may never receive regulatory approval for iSONEP, ASONEP or any of its drug candidates; and the Company may not be able to secure the funds necessary to support its clinical-trial and product-development plans. More detailed information about the Company and the risk factors that may affect the realization of forward-looking statements is set forth in the Company's filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission, including its Annual Report on Form 10-K and its Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q filed. Such documents may be read free of charge on the SEC's web site at www.sec.gov. You are cautioned not to place undue reliance on these forward-looking statements, which speak only as of the date hereof. All forward-looking statements are qualified in their entirety by this cautionary statement and the Company undertakes no obligation to revise or update this press release to reflect events or circumstances after the date hereof. This caution is made under the safe harbor provisions of Section 21E of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995.

Lpath, Inc. Scott R. Pancoast President & CEO 858-678-0800 x104

Lpath Investor Relations Liolios Group, Inc. (949) 574-3860

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