

Autoimmunity BioSolutions raises \$2M Series Seed to advance development of a next-generation, immuno-corrective therapy for autoimmune disease treatment



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HOUSTON, Nov. 21, 2024 /PRNewswire/ -- Autoimmunity BioSolutions (ABS), a biotechnology company pioneering a next-generation, immuno-corrective therapy for a highly prevalent, genetically-defined subpopulation of patients that suffer from autoimmune disease, announced the closing of a seed financing led by Eos Biolnnovation, with participation from Alexandria Venture Investments, Independent Capital and others.

ABS was founded based on the groundbreaking research of Drs. Gaddiel Galarza-Muñoz and Mariano A. Garcia-Blanco, when the Garcia-Blanco laboratory was at Duke University and University of Texas Medical Branch. ABS targets a branch of the Interleukin-7 (IL7) / Interleukin-7 receptor (IL7R) pathway controlled by the soluble Interleukin-7 receptor (sIL7R), a critical amplifier of autoimmune reactions. In particular, the founders discovered that a highly prevalent single nucleotide polymorphism (SNP) that increases the risk and severity of autoimmune disease, does so by enhancing the expression of sIL7R. ABS has developed monoclonal antibodies highly specific for sIL7R. "While the role of IL7 and IL7R in autoimmunity has been documented in the literature, our genetic and biochemical studies indicated that the alternative isoform – sIL7R – is the real culprit in this pathway, and thus the desired target of therapy", said Mariano A. Garcia-Blanco, MD, PhD, co-founder of ABS and currently Professor and Chair of Microbiology, Immunology and Cancer Biology at the University of Virginia.

The seed capital will fund the development of the company's lead program, a first-in-class series of monoclonal antibodies specifically targeting sIL7R while sparing membrane-bound IL7R. "Our novel anti-sIL7R antibodies were developed to correct an over-reactive immune system in a genetically-defined population of patients with autoimmune disease", said Gaddiel Galarza-Muñoz, PhD, ABS co-founder and CSO. "The SNP and elevated sIL7R are associated with poor prognosis in numerous autoimmune diseases, such as greater risk of progressive disease as in progressive multiple sclerosis (MS), worse disease activity in diseases like lupus nephritis, and poor response to therapy in rheumatoid arthritis. We believe that the sIL7R biology leading to those poor outcomes is driven by substantially greater accumulation of autoreactive effector and memory T cells over time, leading to exacerbation of disease severity."

Gene Williams, ABS CEO, said: "I am thrilled to be part of this outstanding team in the effort to develop therapies that could be transformative for many patients with autoimmune disease and want to thank our outstanding group of investors for their support. ABS is in the forefront of a next generation of transformative therapies correcting the genetic drivers of disease in a genetically-defined population. Based on the known epidemiology and biology, we expect our therapies will have value in severe disease populations that are challenging to treat, such as progressive MS or lupus nephritis, where we might see efficient early proof of concept and possibly a rapid path to approval. In addition, we plan to collaborate with leaders in the field to explore the possibility that genetically-defined immuno-corrective therapy such as ours, with its likely safety advantages over current standards of care, could emerge as first line concomitant therapy for all patients with the SNP, to mitigate risk of disease progression as well as treat severe disease, and possibly to reduce the need for immunosuppression."

Brock Reeve, Chairman of ABS and CEO of Eos Biolnnovation said: "We are proud to lead ABS's first external financing and help bring the founders' scientific insight to the clinic and the market. ABS is an example of the type of groundbreaking early-stage innovation that is Eos' focus as a seed investor. We thank our co-investors who have joined us so far, and look forward to welcoming others into the syndicate to build a novel and potentially transformative approach to treat autoimmune diseases."

About Autoimmunity BioSolutions

Autoimmunity BioSolutions (ABS) is a seed-stage biotech developing a next-generation, **immuno-corrective** antibody therapy for treatment of autoimmune diseases to restore normal immune function. This therapy is targeted to a genetically-defined subpopulation of autoimmune disease patients marked by a highly prevalent genetic variant (SNP) associated with increased risk and severity of various autoimmune diseases. This **immuno-corrective** approach to autoimmune disease treatment is highly differentiated from current standards of care that rely on immunosuppressive mechanisms, and has broad potential to treat numerous autoimmune diseases.

About Eos Biolnnovation

Launched in 2021, Eos Biolnnovation is a venture capital fund that focuses on building and launching early-stage companies in the regenerative medicine field. Eos works closely with founding scientists, entrepreneurs, fellow investors and strategic partners to ensure its portfolio companies' success in creating the therapies of tomorrow.

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