



For Immediate Release

The NEI Awards \$2.03 Million Commercialization SBIR Grant to Aciont

Salt Lake City, UT – May 9, 2013. The National Eye Institute (NEI), a division of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), awarded a \$2.03 million phase IIB grant to Aciont Inc. to fund the clinical development of a non-invasive, passive diffusion-based treatment for uveitis (referred to as DSP-Visulex-TM). The NEI special emphasis peer review panel that reviewed Aciont's proposal stated, "Overall, this is a novel, exciting approach that has potential to make a broad impact in the clinical ophthalmology field and thus is recommended with a high level of enthusiasm."

Aciont's Visulex treatment entails a proprietary combination of a pharmaceutical formulation and a scleral lens-shaped topical eye application device that delivers therapeutically relevant doses of drug to intraocular tissues in less than 10 minutes. Aciont completed work under the preclinical proof of concept phase of the grant with the support of research faculty at the University of Utah's departments of pharmaceuticals and pharmaceutical chemistry and the John A. Moran Eye Center.

"We are humbled that the NEI has awarded Aciont a highly competitive, continuing renewal commercialization grant that will support the clinical development of our novel, non-invasive, ocular drug delivery system," said John Higuchi, Aciont's chief executive officer. Higuchi also noted that "The DSP Visulex treatment potentially may address treating a wide variety of diseases of the eye relating to intraocular inflammation whether it entails remedying eye surface indications or posterior eye disease such as diabetic macular edema. The potential collective global market value in ophthalmology using the DSP Visulex treatment is the range in excess of \$2 billion." Dr. Balbir Brar, Aciont's senior vice president of research and development, added "This continuous funding of the project by the NEI is a testimonial to the unique therapeutic approach that Aciont scientists are pursuing for treating both important and underserved diseases of the eye and we are very thankful for this."

The project described is supported by NIH Award Number R44EY014772-04 from the National Eye Institute. Prior to this new grant announcement, the NEI has funded approximately \$2.55 million to support the first three years of this project. A key aim of the new project is to complete a phase 2 clinical trial demonstrating the safety and efficacy of the DSP Visulex treatment in man. A phase IIB grant (which should not be confused with the "phase 2 clinical trial" terminology) is a rare SBIR award that accelerates a promising technology company's commercialization efforts in the so-called years 4 and 5 of the project. Such grants are awarded to projects demonstrating both scientific merit and commercialization potential while addressing an important societal need in public health. The content of the grant is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Eye Institute or the National Institutes of Health.

Aciont Inc. is a specialty biopharmaceutical company endeavoring to become the world leader in commercializing localized, non-invasive (topical passive diffusion-based and iontophoretic), controlled and sustained release back of the eye therapeutics for sight threatening diseases such as severe uveitis, diabetic macular edema and age-related macular degeneration. Aciont's goal is to provide ophthalmologists substantially greater freedom in treating and/or preventing chronic eye diseases through optimal drug dosing and improved patient/physician compliance. Aciont is located in Salt Lake City, Utah. For more information, visit the company's website at www.aciont.com.

Source: Aciont Inc.

Contact Information: Ashlee Trebilcock, Aciont Inc.; Main phone line: (801) 359-3461; e-mail: admin@aciont.com.