Start-Up ImmusanT Seeks to Restore Tolerance to Gluten in Celiac Disease with Immunotherapy

CAMBRIDGE, Mass., March 15, 2011 – Biotechnology company ImmusanT, Inc. today announced it has established its operations in Cambridge, Massachusetts and is advancing its strategy to develop an immunotherapeutic vaccine, companion diagnostic and monitoring tool for celiac disease. The company completed the acquisition of a discovery platform for targeted immunotherapies from Nexpep Pty., Ltd., based in Melbourne, Australia, and secured seed financing from angel investors to advance its product pipeline to address the rapidly escalating number of patients diagnosed with celiac disease, a lifelong autoimmune disorder that is triggered by foods containing gluten, the main protein in wheat, rye and barley.

ImmusanT is focused on restoring tolerance to gluten in celiac disease by harnessing discoveries in immunology that improve diagnosis and treatment and return patients to a normal diet, good health and improved quality of life. ImmusanT’s product pipeline includes Nexvax2®, a therapeutic vaccine that combines three proprietary peptides that elicit an immune response in patients with celiac disease who carry the immune recognition gene HLA-DQ2. ImmusanT Scientific Founder and Chief Scientific and Medical Officer Dr. Bob Anderson discovered the three primary peptides responsible for making gluten toxic to people with celiac disease. Safety, tolerability and bioactivity of Nexvax2 have been established in a Phase 1 clinical study completed last year and the therapeutic vaccine is ready to advance to a Phase 2a clinical trial, expected to begin in the next twelve months. Data from the Phase 1 study will be presented at Digestive Disease Week in Chicago, May 7-10, 2011.

“Celiac disease is the first human immune disease for which there is comprehensive understanding of the pathogenic T-cell response. We have a solid scientific foundation from which to develop the Nexvax2 immunotherapy, as well as a companion diagnostic and monitoring test for celiac disease, which have the potential to dramatically improve management of this lifelong disease,” said Bob Anderson, PhD, MBChB, a gastroenterologist and highly respected international expert in immunology and clinical management of celiac disease at The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research.

Nexvax2 is delivered intradermally in small doses to reprogram and desensitize the disease-causing T-cells triggered by the patient’s immune response to gluten. The approach is similar to
treatments for allergies to cats, ragweed or dust mites, whereby repeated doses establish non-
responsiveness to a specific antigen, and in the case of celiac disease, reduces or eliminates
the body’s rejection of dietary gluten. By reprogramming the T-cell response, the Nexvax2
approach is designed to reduce inflammation in the villi which line the small intestine and are
responsible for absorbing nutrients. This returns the intestine to a normal healthy state.

Leveraging ImmusanT’s proprietary peptide technology, the company has a commercial
agreement with INOVA Diagnostics to develop improved serology diagnostic screening tests for
celiac disease. In addition to using existing blood tests, currently the disease is diagnosed by a
gastroenterologist using an endoscopic biopsy to take multiple tissue samples from the small
intestine. In parallel, ImmusanT is developing a novel, simple whole-blood ELISA companion
test to measure the activity of T-cells causing celiac disease and monitor optimal maintenance
of immune tolerance with Nexvax2. Both diagnostic approaches may eliminate the need for an
invasive surgical biopsy.

“With the formation of ImmusanT in Cambridge, we will have broad access to resources, capital
and potential partners required to advance development of Nexvax2 and our companion
diagnostics,” said Leslie J. Williams, founder, president and chief executive officer of ImmusanT,
Inc. “ImmusanT’s near-term opportunity is to provide a novel treatment to address the high
unmet need and untapped growing market of celiac disease. Longer-term we will exploit our
discovery platform to identify other autoimmune diseases, such as Type 1 diabetes and irritable
bowel syndrome, where diagnosis and treatment could be improved using our targeted
approach.”

Ms. Williams has extensive experience with emerging biotechnology companies and was most
recently president and chief executive officer of Ventaira Pharmaceuticals. She was a senior
marketing strategist for INO Therapeutics and gained drug-delivery and drug-monitoring
experience at Datex-Ohmeda (formerly Ohmeda). Ms. Williams’ prior pharmaceutical industry
experience includes commercial positions at Merck and GlaxoSmithKline. As a Battelle
Ventures venture partner, Ms. Williams assisted early-stage technology companies with
strategy, management and business development. She mentors early-stage entrepreneurs and
serves as a director of Hepregen Corp, CDI Bioscience and The Capital Network. Ms. Williams
holds an MBA from Washington University and a BS degree with honors in nursing from the
University of Iowa. Before entering industry, she was a critical-care nurse at Duke University,
Medical College of Virginia and at the University of Iowa.

About Celiac Disease
Celiac disease is an inherited autoimmune disorder that affects the digestive process of the
small intestine. When a person who has celiac disease consumes gluten, a protein found in
wheat, rye and barley, the individual’s immune system responds by triggering T-cells to fight the
offending proteins, damaging the small intestine and inhibiting the absorption of important
nutrients into the body. With no available drug therapy, the only option for the approximately 1%
of the global population that has celiac disease is to eliminate gluten from the diet. Compliance
is often challenging and nearly half the people on the strict elimination diet still have residual
damage to their small intestine.

Undiagnosed, celiac disease is a major contributor to poor educational performance and failure
to thrive in children. Untreated disease in adults is associated with increased risk of fractures
and osteoporosis, problems during pregnancy and birth, short stature, dental enamel
hypoplasia, dermatitis, recurrent stomatitis and cancer.

About ImmusanT, Inc.
ImmusanT is a privately-held biotechnology company focused on restoring tolerance to gluten in
celiac disease by harnessing new discoveries in immunology that improve diagnosis and
treatment and return patients to a normal diet, good health and improved quality of life. The
company’s Nexvax2® therapeutic vaccine for celiac disease is preparing to advance to Phase
2a clinical trials. ImmusanT is simultaneously developing a companion diagnostic and
monitoring tool to improve celiac disease management. Its targeted immunotherapy discovery
platform may have additional applications for a variety of epitope-specific autoimmune diseases.
More information can be found at www.ImmusanT.com.

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