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Press Release

ASKA Pharmaceutical Holdings Co., Ltd.

ASKA Pharmaceutical Selected for AMED's Global Research and Development Support Program for Rare and Intractable Diseases (GRiT)

– Advancing the Development of AKP-021 Toward a Phase II Clinical Trial in Patients with IC/BPS –

TOKYO, November 9, 2026 – ASKA Pharmaceutical Holdings Co., Ltd. (Head Office: Minato-ku, Tokyo / President, Representative Director: Sohta Yamaguchi) hereby announces that its subsidiary, ASKA Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd. (Head Office: Minato-ku, Tokyo / President, Representative Director: Sohta Yamaguchi; hereinafter "ASKA Pharmaceutical"), has been selected for the FY2026 Global Research and Development Support Program for Rare and Intractable Diseases ("GRiT Program") under the Advanced Research and Development Programs for Medical Innovation (Industry-Government-Academia Collaboration, Global Type), conducted by the Japan Agency for Medical Research and Development (AMED), for its research and development project entitled "Research and Development to Verify the Efficacy and Evaluate the Safety of AKP-021 in Patients with IC/BPS."

The GRiT Program is designed to support the research and development of pharmaceuticals and other medical products for rare and intractable diseases and to promote the practical application of innovative treatments originating in Japan. In this funding round, eight projects were selected from 25 applications.

Interstitial cystitis/bladder pain syndrome (IC/BPS) is a chronic condition characterized by symptoms including severe bladder pain, urinary frequency, and urinary urgency. While the condition significantly affects patients' quality of life (QOL), treatment options remain limited, resulting in a significant unmet medical need and a strong need for the development of new treatments.

About AKP-021

AKP-021 is a novel compound discovered by ASKA Pharmaceutical that selectively inhibits microsomal prostaglandin E synthase-1 (mPGES-1). mPGES-1 is an enzyme involved in the production of prostaglandin E2 (PGE2), which plays a role in inflammation and pain. By selectively inhibiting mPGES-1, AKP-021 suppresses the production of PGE2. Based on this mechanism of action, AKP-021 is expected to provide a new therapeutic option for patients with IC/BPS.

Significance of the Selection and Future Development

ASKA Pharmaceutical has been advancing the research and development of AKP-021 with the aim of creating a new treatment for IC/BPS, leveraging the knowledge and drug development experience it has accumulated in the urology field.

ASKA Pharmaceutical regards its selection for the GRiT Program as an important milestone in the development of AKP-021 and will utilize the support provided through the program to advance preparations for the initiation of a Phase II clinical trial. The company will continue to steadily advance the research and development of AKP-021 with the aim of delivering a new treatment option to patients suffering from IC/BPS as soon as possible.

This matter will have no impact on the Company's consolidated financial results for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2027.

Media Contacts
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