



## **OcuCure Therapeutics: Developing Novel Eye Drop Treatments for Wet and Dry Age-related Macular Degeneration**

### **\$1.5 Million Seed Financing Funds Development of a Topical Eye Drop and Preclinical Validation**

ROANOKE, Va. (November 8, 2006) - OcuCure Therapeutics, Inc. is an ophthalmic pharmaceutical company developing novel treatments to prevent vision loss caused by back of the eye diseases. The Company has received \$1.5 million in seed financing to advance its compounds, which have been formulated as a topical eye drop for both wet Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD) treatment and dry AMD prophylaxis. The Company's compounds also have potential applications for diabetic retinopathy and other back of the eye blinding diseases.

Current therapies for wet AMD are designed only to inhibit specific growth factors, such as VEGF, one of the many factors contributing to AMD. OcuCure's new generation of therapeutic compounds are vascular targeting agents that have demonstrated a strong safety record in animal studies. These selective tubulin inhibitors prevent new blood vessels from sprouting (antiangiogenic activity) as well as directly target the elimination of newly formed blood vessels (angiolytic activity). This dual mechanism more completely addresses the uncontrolled blood vessel growth associated with AMD. Therefore, the OcuCure approach could lead to better long-term visual outcomes.

"Our dual mechanism compound acts at the downstream end of the common pathways that lead to AMD. This differentiated approach represents a more complete treatment, that should enable our compound to be used by itself or in AMD combination therapy," said Sunder Malkani, President and CEO of OcuCure. "Our seed financing has enabled us to obtain evidence of efficacy for our topical eye drop in wet AMD animal models. Because of this efficacy, the topical eye drop could also be used as a prophylactic treatment for dry AMD. We now hope to raise additional funding from institutional venture investors to complete preclinical testing and initiate human trials."

Animal studies indicate that the eye drop formulation has a favorable safety profile and penetrates all the way back to the retina at clinically significant concentrations. Additionally, other studies demonstrate the lead compound's ability to cross the much thicker human cornea.

Craig M. Greven, M.D., Chairman of the Department of Ophthalmology, Wake Forest University Eye Center, is Medical Advisor to OcuCure Therapeutics. Dr. Greven commented, "Current drugs for wet AMD must be administered via monthly direct injections to the eye, so OcuCure's development of a topical eye drop that reaches the retina in significant concentrations potentially represents a more convenient, attractive treatment option for patients."



“We believe that OcuCure’s unique compounds for the treatment of AMD promise to significantly impact visual outcomes for millions of people suffering from this disease,” said Daniel Barchi, President of the Carilion Biomedical Institute. “OcuCure has assembled a world class group of business and scientific advisors and we are pleased to support a Roanoke-based company that is further developing an ophthalmic breakthrough that started right here at the Carilion Biomedical Institute.”

OcuCure was formed in August 2005 based on drug discovery research supported by the Carilion Biomedical Institute and has received two rounds of seed financing totaling \$1.5 million. The Company is led by a skilled management team, Board of Directors, and Scientific Advisory Board comprised of individuals experienced in the eye care space and in creating and growing healthcare businesses.

Sunder Malkani has extensive experience in creating and growing start-up businesses, particularly in the eye care field. He developed and commercialized the AOSEPT contact lens solution, which was later acquired by Novartis’ CIBA Vision. Patricia Williams, Ph.D., who is consulting as OcuCure’s Chief Scientific Officer, has focused her preclinical and clinical pharmacology work on safe and efficacious treatments for blinding eye diseases. She is a founding member of EyeRx Research, Inc., which strives to develop ophthalmic drugs through clinical trials and the regulatory process. Sam English, Ph.D., Vice President of Pharmaceutical Services, was previously the Director of Research at the Carilion Biomedical Institute, where he was responsible for managing the research funding that led to the discovery of the small antiangiogenic molecules utilized by OcuCure.

OcuCure’s Board of Directors includes W. Ben Deibler, who formerly served as Global Vice President of Business Development for Johnson & Johnson Vision Care Inc.; Richard M. Haugen, President of Newport Assets, Inc. and former COO and Board member of Allergan; Steve M. Martin, CEO of HiTech Partners and founder of CIBA Vision and former President of CIBA Vision Ophthalmics (now Novartis Ophthalmics); and Paul S. Williams, President of Heflin & Williams, Inc.

The Company’s Scientific Advisory Board includes eye care specialists, who hold influential chairmanship and professorship posts at leading universities, are practicing ophthalmologists, possess clinically relevant patents, have published prolifically in peer-reviewed scientific publications, and have led and conducted numerous clinical trials.

#### **About Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD)**

AMD is a debilitating eye disease and is the leading cause of legal blindness. Data from the National Institutes of Health indicate that nearly one-third of those over age 75 will develop AMD. Wet AMD is caused by the growth of abnormal, fragile blood vessels behind the retina, a process called choroidal neovascularization (CNV). As these vessels grow, they leak fluid and blood, which rapidly damages the macula. The resulting vision



loss may progress to blindness. While only 10-15% of AMD patients have the wet form, it accounts for 90% of all severe vision loss and blindness from the disease. Approximately 200,000 new cases of wet AMD in the U.S. each year represent an annual market opportunity of approximately \$2 billion, with an estimated ex-U.S. market comparable in size. As the population ages, so will the prevalence of AMD increase.

### **About OcuCure**

Ocucure Therapeutics Inc. ([www.OcuCure.com](http://www.OcuCure.com)) is an early stage biopharmaceutical company developing new proprietary drugs and technologies to reduce and prevent vision loss caused by eye diseases. The Company's lead product targets wet Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD), the leading cause of blindness in developed countries. The lead compound has been identified from a portfolio of numerous viable compounds. OcuCure Therapeutics will bring to market a new wave of unique drugs for the treatment of AMD.

### **Contact**

Sunder Malkani  
President and CEO  
OcuCure Therapeutics, Inc.  
(540) 819-2433  
[smalkani@ocucure.com](mailto:smalkani@ocucure.com)

### **Media**

Kari Watson  
MacDougall Biomedical Communications  
(508) 647-0209

[kwatson@macbiocom.com](mailto:kwatson@macbiocom.com)

###