

Sunesis Pharmaceuticals Reports Data from Nonclinical Studies of SNS-032 at the Annual Meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research

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SNS-032 Demonstrates Activity in Multiple Myeloma and Mantle Cell Lymphoma

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO, Calif., April 16, 2008 /PRNewswire-FirstCall via COMTEX News Network/ -- Sunesis Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (Nasdaq: SNSS) today reported data from nonclinical studies of SNS-032 in multiple myeloma and mantle cell lymphoma. Data from studies conducted in collaboration with the Multiple Myeloma Research Consortium (MMRC) and with the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center were presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) in San Diego, CA. SNS-032, a potent and selective inhibitor of cyclin-dependent kinases (CDKs) 2, 7 and 9, is currently in a Phase 1 clinical trial in patients with chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL) or multiple myeloma.

"Our collaborations with leading oncology thought leaders, such as Dr. Trudel and the MMRC Validation Team and Dr. Plunkett of MD Anderson Cancer Center, provide us with important new insights into SNS-032's activity in hematologic cancers," said Daniel C. Adelman, M.D., Senior Vice President, Development and Chief Medical Officer of Sunesis.

"Results presented today from studies in primary and human cell lines demonstrate SNS-032's potential both alone and in combination with other agents in multiple myeloma and other B cell malignancies and further support our ongoing Phase 1 clinical trial."

An oral presentation by Suzanne Trudel, MSc, M.D., Assistant Professor, Princess Margaret Hospital, University Health Network in Toronto, Canada, focused on results from studies by the MMRC Validation Team, in collaboration with Sunesis scientists, of SNS-032 in human myeloma cell lines and primary multiple myeloma cells. SNS-032 demonstrated broad, mechanism-based activity in the human myeloma cell lines and preferentially induced apoptosis in primary multiple myeloma cells versus peripheral blood mononuclear cells. In a series of studies examining SNS-032's mechanism of action and activity in human myeloma cell lines, SNS-032 inhibited proliferation and induced apoptosis, down-regulating key anti-apoptotic proteins and resulting in G1 arrest. In addition, SNS-032 was active in combination with two approved agents for multiple myeloma, bortezomib (Velcade(R)) and lenalidomide (Revlimid(R)), in human myeloma cell lines. SNS-032 also demonstrated anticancer activity in vivo in a transgenic mouse model of multiple myeloma. These data (Abstract #4972) were presented during a minisymposium on Novel Genomic Approaches, Drugs, Targets, and Strategies in a talk titled "SNS-032, a potent and selective CDK2, 7 and 9 inhibitor, demonstrates preclinical activity in human multiple myeloma."

In addition, on Sunday, April 13, 2008 at the AACR Annual Meeting, William Plunkett, Ph.D., Professor and Chief, Section of Molecular and Cellular Oncology at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, presented translational research data detailing the relationship between SNS-032's mechanism and its activity in mantle cell lymphoma. Mantle cell lymphoma is an aggressive form of Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma driven by the over-expression of certain oncoproteins, including cyclin D1, Mcl-1 and Myc. SNS-032's targeted inhibition of CDKs 7 and 9 blocks transcription of these proteins, resulting in cell death in a panel of mantle cell lymphoma cell lines. These data were presented at the AACR Annual Meeting in a poster titled "SNS-032, a novel inhibitor of cyclin-dependent kinases 2, 7, and 9, blocks transcription of cyclin D1 and Mcl-1, causing cell death in mantle cell lymphoma cell lines" (Abstract #756).

About Sunesis Pharmaceuticals

Sunesis is a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company focused on the discovery, development and commercialization of novel small molecule therapeutics for oncology and other serious diseases. Sunesis has built a broad product candidate portfolio through internal discovery and in-licensing of novel cancer therapeutics. Sunesis is advancing its product candidates through in-house research and development efforts and strategic collaborations with leading pharmaceutical and biopharmaceutical companies. For additional information on Sunesis Pharmaceuticals, please visit

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Safe-Harbor Statement

This press release contains forward-looking statements including without limitation statements related to the potential activity and uses of SNS-032, and the potential for SNS-032 to be tested in other indications. Words such as "potential" and similar expressions are intended to identify forward-looking statements. These forward-looking statements are based upon Sunesis' current expectations. Forward-looking statements involve risks and uncertainties. Sunesis' actual results and the timing of events could differ materially from those anticipated in such forward-looking statements as a result of these risks and uncertainties, which include, without limitation, the risk that Sunesis' drug discovery and development activities, including enrollment and reporting of results, could be halted significantly or delayed for various reasons, the risk that Sunesis' clinical trials for SNS-032 may not demonstrate safety or efficacy or lead to regulatory approval, the risk that preliminary data and trends may not be predictive of future data or results, the risk that Sunesis' preclinical studies and clinical trials may not satisfy the requirements of the FDA or other regulatory agencies, risks related to the conduct of Sunesis' clinical trials and manufacturing of SNS-032 and risks related to Sunesis' need for additional funding. These and other risk factors are discussed under "Risk Factors" and elsewhere in Sunesis' annual report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2007 and other filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Sunesis expressly disclaims any obligation or undertaking to release publicly any updates or revisions to any forward-looking statements contained herein to reflect any change in the company's expectations with regard thereto or any change in events, conditions or circumstances on which any such statements are based.

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