

NAICONS and NexThera Transfer Rights Of NAI-107, A New Anti-MRSA Antibiotic, To Sentinella Pharmaceuticals



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Author: [NAICONS](#) - [NexThera](#)

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Milano, Italy, January 19th, 2010 – NAICONS (New Anti-Infectives CONSortium) and NexThera Biosciences, Italian companies focusing on the discovery and development of novel anti-infective drugs, today announced that they have entered into an agreement with Sentinella Pharmaceuticals, Inc., a US-based pharmaceutical company established by Care Capital LLC, a leading life sciences venture capital firm. Under the terms of the agreement, Sentinella has acquired all rights to NAICONS' proprietary lantibiotic technology, including its lead product candidate NAI-107, in exchange for an upfront cash payment, future development and commercialization milestones, royalties on future product sales and an equity stake in Sentinella. Lantibiotics represent a new class of natural products with potent bactericidal activity against gram positive bacteria including the multi-drug resistant pathogens MRSA and VRE.

"This agreement represents an important recognition of NAICONS's ability to discover and characterize innovative antibiotics with a novel mechanism of action", stated Stefano Donadio, NAICONS' Chief Scientific Officer. "Our technology is based on fermentation products and includes strong expertise in manipulating antibiotic-producing bacterial strains. This agreement further

supports NAICONs' mission of rebuilding the strong and successful Italian tradition in the antibiotic field."

"Our partnership with a US-based pharmaceutical company represents the best opportunity to rapidly and successfully advance a potential life-saving drug into clinical development in its largest market. It also gives NexThera international visibility for developing additional anti-infective compounds", said Daniela Jabes, NexThera's Chief Executive Officer. "This agreement represents the first tangible result of the synergy between NAICONs's discovery engine and NexThera's development focus."

"We are delighted to be entering into this transaction with NAICONs and NexThera," said David Ramsay, a Director of Sentinella. "The principals behind NAICONs and NexThera have a successful track record in the discovery and development of anti-infective products, including rifamycins, penems, dalbavancin and ramoplanin , and we hope to build on that success to develop and commercialize an important novel class of antibiotics for the treatment of multi-drug resistant nosocomial infections."

Every year several million people worldwide acquire infections while in hospitals, with significant mortality rates. Continuing a trend that began several years ago, it is estimated that approximately seventy percent of hospital infections are currently caused by pathogens resistant to at least one class of existing antibiotics. Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) and Vancomycin Resistant Enterococci (VRE) are among the most dangerous nosocomial pathogens.

According to the Infectious Diseases Society of America, drug resistant bacteria represent a significant economic burden because of the need for costly drugs, extended hospital stays and lost working days. The annual cost of infections by drug-resistant pathogens has been estimated as nearly \$5 billion in the U.S. alone.

Contact Details: Daniela Jabes

NexThera Biosciences srl

Via G. Fantoli 16/15

20138 Milano

Italy

Phone: +390250320901

Fax: +390250320919

djabes@nextthera.com

sdonadio@naicons.com

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