



**Escient Pharmaceuticals Launches with \$40 Million Series A Financing to Advance First-in-Class G Protein-Coupled Receptor (GPCR)-Targeted Drugs to Address Serious, Unserved Medical Needs**

*-- Strategic focus on unleashing therapeutic potential of specific orphan GPCRs, including novel family of Mas-Related G-Protein Receptors (Mrgprs) --*

*-- Opportunity to pursue novel therapeutics for a broad range of indications; initial focus on neuro-immuno-inflammatory and autoreactive diseases --*

*-- Series A investors include The Column Group, 5AM Ventures and Osage University Partners --*

*-- Co-founders bring deep expertise in GPCR scientific research and drug development, and proven entrepreneurial track record --*

San Diego, CA – May 9, 2018 – Escient Pharmaceuticals launched today with the completion of a \$40 million Series A financing to advance first-in-class G Protein-Coupled Receptor (GPCR)-targeted drugs to address serious, unserved medical needs across a broad range of therapeutic indications. Focused on unleashing the therapeutic potential of specific orphan GPCRs, including the novel family of Mas-Related G-Protein Receptors (Mrgprs), Escient will initially pursue therapies for neuro-immuno-inflammatory and autoreactive diseases. The company will use proceeds from the Series A financing, syndicated by [The Column Group](#) and [5AM Ventures](#) and joined by [Osage University Partners](#), to build out its team, advance its pipeline, and progress its initial preclinical programs to clinical study.

Escient's Co-founders and executive leadership include Alain D. Baron, M.D., Chief Executive Officer (CEO), and Marcus F. Boehm, Ph.D., Chief Scientific Officer (CSO). Drs. Baron and Boehm bring deep expertise in GPCR drug discovery and development, respectively, each co-founding and serving in key leadership roles with companies including Elcelyx Therapeutics, Receptos, Inc., and Amylin Pharmaceuticals. Escient's scientific and third Co-founder, Xinzhong Dong, Ph.D. is a Howard Hughes Medical Institute investigator and Professor of Neuroscience, Neurosurgery and Dermatology with the Solomon H. Snyder Department of Neuroscience at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Dr. Dong, a world-renowned researcher of Mrgprs, will serve on Escient's Scientific Advisory Board.

"GPCR-targeted drugs account for a large percentage of today's best-selling medicines. And, yet, this broad success has hinged upon exploiting a relatively small set of GPCRs, leaving significant opportunity to mine the potential of numerous unexplored GPCRs, including the specific receptors we are focused on at Escient," said Dr. Baron. "We look forward to building a world-class team in the coming months dedicated to translating our proprietary insights about the functions and biology of these target GPCRs to develop novel therapies that address serious, unserved clinical needs of patients impacted by our lead indications."

“We quickly recognized the tremendous opportunity of the orphan GPCRs that Escient is targeting,” said Robert Tjian, Ph.D., Discovery Partner at The Column Group, Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at University of California, Berkeley, and a Director on Escient’s Board. “Alain and Marcus’ GPCR-specific experience and previous entrepreneurial successes, coupled with Xinzhong’s indisputable scholarship in this area, well position Escient in this historically productive area of drug discovery and development.”

Joining Dr. Tjian on Escient’s Board of Directors are JJ Kang, Ph.D., Principal at The Column Group, Andrew J. Schwab, Founder and Managing Partner at 5AM Ventures, and Charles S. Zuker, Ph.D., Professor of Biochemistry, Molecular Biophysics and Neuroscience at Columbia University and a Howard Hughes Medical Institute investigator.

### **Experienced Leadership**

Alain Baron, M.D., Escient’s CEO, is Co-founder, President and CEO of San Diego-based Elcelyx Therapeutics. Dr. Baron previously served as Venture Partner at Lightstone Ventures and held the role of Entrepreneur-in-Residence at its predecessor firm, Morgenthaler Ventures. He also was Co-Founder, President and CEO of NaZura BioHealth, Inc. In addition, Dr. Baron’s previous industry experience includes serving as Senior Vice President of Research for nearly a decade with Amylin Pharmaceuticals.

Marcus F. Boehm, Ph.D., Escient’s CSO, was a Co-founder and former CTO with Receptos, Inc. for six years until the company’s acquisition by Celgene Corporation in 2015. He also previously served as Vice President, Chemistry at Conformia Therapeutics, and prior to that served in several scientific leadership roles with Ligand Pharmaceuticals.

### **World-Class, Multi-Disciplinary Scientific Advisory Board**

Escient has assembled a world-class Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) that brings together leading experts in the biology and clinical translation in fields of initial interest. In addition to serving as a board director, Dr. Zuker will also serve on Escient’s SAB along with Dr. Dong. Other SAB members include: Ethan Lerner M.D., Ph.D., Associate Professor of Dermatology, Harvard Medical School, Associate Biologist (Cutaneous Biology Research Center), Massachusetts General Hospital; Scott L. Friedman, M.D., Dean for Therapeutic Discovery and Chief of the Division of Liver Diseases, and Professor of Medicine, Liver Diseases and Professor of Pharmacological Sciences, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai; and Diana Bautista Ph.D., Associate Professor of Cell and Developmental Biology, Department of Molecular and Cell Biology and Helen Wills Neuroscience Institute, University of California, Berkeley.

### **About Escient Pharmaceuticals**

Escient Pharmaceuticals is a privately held biotechnology company that is advancing first-in-class G Protein-Coupled Receptor (GPCR)-targeted drugs to address serious, unserved medical needs across a broad range of therapeutic indications. Focused on unleashing the therapeutic potential of specific orphan GPCRs, including the novel family of Mas-Related G-Protein Receptors (Mrgprs), Escient will initially pursue therapies for neuro-immuno-inflammatory and autoreactive diseases. Based in San Diego, Calif., Escient is led by an experienced team of biotechnology entrepreneurs with specific expertise in GPCR drug discovery and development, and funded by top-tier life science investors,

including The Column Group, 5AM Ventures and Osage University Partners. Visit [www.escientpharma.com](http://www.escientpharma.com) to learn more.

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