

October 15, 2021
ONSSI Corporation
Yoshiyuki Ohsugi, Chairman
Akio Tanaka, CEO

Notice of Execution of Option Agreement with Merck & Co., Inc., Kenilworth, N.J., U.S.A.

We are pleased to announce that ONSSI Corporation (Headquarters: Taito-ku, Tokyo / President: Akio Tanaka, hereinafter referred to as "the Company") has signed an optional agreement with MSD (Headquarters: Kenilworth, New Jersey, USA / CEO: Robert Davis, hereinafter referred to as "MSD") for ONS-1 which is under preclinical development.

About ONS-1

ONS-1 is based on the research results using patient specimens by Dr. Tetsuji Naka, a professor of the Department of Molecular Pathology, Collagen Disease Allergy Internal Medicine and Medical and Dental Research Institute, Iwate Medical University School of Medicine. ONS-1 is currently in the safety testing stage.

About Professor Tetsuji Naka

Professor Naka while under Professor Tadimitsu Kishimoto (former President of Osaka University), was the first to identify the SOCS protein which is a regulator of cytokine signaling and published these findings in Nature in 1997. From there, Professor Naka has held key positions at the National Institute of Biomedical Innovation, Health and Nutrition as well as Kochi University where instead of conducting his research on pure biological phenomena, he emphasized the use of patient specimens in combination with cutting edge genetic engineering and protein analysis technologies to directly connect clinical and fundamental research. Through employing these methodologies, Professor Naka was able to identify Leucine rich2 α Glycoprotein (LRG) from Rheumatoid arthritis patient serum as an active biomarker for inflammatory bowel disease and subsequently developed an antibody against LRG to be used in a diagnostic assay. This diagnostic assay was included for coverage by Japanese National Health Insurance in June, 2020 and has demonstrated great social impact. Apart from LRG, Professor Naka has identified a wide variety of targets and actively continues his pursuit of diagnostic and therapeutic development. Professor Naka is one of the founding members of ONSSI.

About ONSSI Corporation

ONSSI Corporation is a bioventure founded by Professor Tetsuji Naka and Dr. Yoshiyuki Ohsugi in 2019 based on cutting edge research results from Professor Naka with a mission to deliver novel therapeutics to patients suffering from intractable diseases as fast as possible. In addition, ONSSI Corporation aims to uncover and bring to life the many valuable therapeutics hidden across Japan's academic institutions and strives to make positive societal contributions. Dr. Yoshiyuki Ohsugi and Dr. Akio Tanaka, who have a high track record of drug discovery at major pharmaceutical companies, are playing a central role in conducting business activities with the aim of out-licensing several assets from the ONSSI pipeline. In particular, Dr. Ohsugi is known for leading the research and development of Actemra, Japan's first antibody drug.

Contact Information

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