



## **Proniras Corporation Announces National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) Grant Award to Pursue Treatment for Opioid Withdrawal**

**SEATTLE, WA — September 17, 2020** —Proniras Corporation, a biotechnology company committed to the development of life saving therapeutic products, today announced that the company and its collaborator, Indiana University (IU) School of Medicine, have received a \$12.3 million grant from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) to support development of the company’s proprietary molecule, tezampanel, as a treatment for opioid withdrawal syndrome. Tezampanel, a novel antagonist of glutamate receptors, is a small molecule parenteral compound that has been evaluated as a potential therapy for acute migraine in more than 400 human subjects and has demonstrated positive results in a variety of preclinical models of seizure disorder. Proniras licensed exclusive global rights to tezampanel (LY-293,558) from Eli Lilly and Company in 2017.

The grant, titled *“AMPA-antagonism: A Novel Pharmacology for Launching Recovery from Opioid Addiction,”* will initially support the laboratory characterization of tezampanel in the context of various preclinical models of opioid withdrawal and in combination with opioid and benzodiazepine drugs commonly associated with opioid addictions and lethal overdoses. If the preclinical work supports further advancement of the development program, the grant also provides funding for human clinical trials of tezampanel in individuals with opioid addiction.

“This grant award underscores the urgent unmet need for safe and effective opioid withdrawal therapies, which are critical for addressing the U.S. opioid addiction crisis,” said Christopher Toombs, PhD, DABT co-founder and chief scientific officer of Proniras. “The tezampanel data generated to date suggest that this proprietary glutamate receptor antagonist may have significant clinical utility in treating opioid withdrawal syndrome and other co-morbid psychiatric conditions. We very much look forward to working closely with R. Andrew Chambers, MD, and the rest of the team in the Department of Psychiatry at the IU School of Medicine to bring tezampanel into clinical trials as soon as possible for the benefit of patients fighting opioid addiction.”

The investment syndicate supporting Proniras, an Accelerator Life Science Partners (ALSP) portfolio company, include Alexandria Venture Investments, ARCH Venture Partners, Eli Lilly and Company, Johnson & Johnson Innovation – JJDC, Inc., Watson Fund, L.P., and WRF Capital.

“Alexandria Venture Investments is pleased to support Proniras in its efforts to end the scourge that is opioid addiction,” said Joel S. Marcus, executive chairman and founder of Alexandria Real Estate Equities, Inc. and Alexandria Venture Investments. “Alexandria has exemplified its deep commitment to the treatment of opioid disorders via its investment in the design and development of OneFifteen, a state-of-the-art campus located in Dayton, Ohio, which focuses on the treatment and rehabilitation of people addicted to opioids. We are excited about the potential application of tezampanel for the treatment of opioid withdrawal syndrome.”

“The progress that Proniras has made in the three years since its founding is important both for the company and for the field of addiction therapy. Such progress is emblematic of the types of companies that ALSP seeks to support,” said David M. Schubert chief operating officer at Proniras and operating partner of ALSP. “This non-dilutive grant augments the historical support of Proniras’ top tier syndicate

of venture capital and big pharma investors and provides additional validation of tezampanel's potential. The U.S. opioid epidemic rages on and is likely worsening as millions of people throughout the country struggle to navigate the unprecedented economic and psychological challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. New treatment modalities that allow more patients to overcome their opioid addiction are urgently needed to address this clear and present threat to individuals and communities with high rates of opioid abuse."

#### **About Proniras Corporation**

Proniras Corporation is a Seattle-based biotechnology company focused on developing tezampanel as a potential treatment for opioid withdrawal and related disorders of addiction. Although effective treatments exist for opioid addiction, painful and difficult withdrawal is one of the reasons treatment fails, and relapse occurs. By alleviating symptoms associated with opioid withdrawal, Proniras hopes to help patients complete their discontinuation of opioids and facilitate successful treatment. The development of tezampanel for opioid withdrawal is supported by federal funding from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), under Grant No. 1UG3DA050923-01. Proniras was founded in 2017 by Accelerator Life Science Partners and Christopher Toombs, PhD, DABT. For more information, please visit [www.proniras.com](http://www.proniras.com).

#### **About IU School of Medicine**

[IU School of Medicine](#) is the largest medical school in the U.S. and is annually ranked among the top medical schools in the nation by U.S. News & World Report. The school offers high-quality medical education, access to leading medical research and rich campus life in nine Indiana cities, including rural and urban locations consistently recognized for livability.