Oorja Bio Launches as a Clinical-Stage Company to Develop Groundbreaking Therapies for Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis (IPF) and Other Fibrotic Diseases

Company announces $30 million Series A financing and founding leadership team with expertise in pulmonary drug innovation and track record advancing novel therapies to patients

ORJ-001, set to begin a Phase 2 clinical trial in IPF in 2026, is a novel approach to restore the function of alveolar epithelial type 2 (AEC2) cells that are central to the pathogenesis of pulmonary fibrosis

HOUSTON, Texas – May 19, 2026 – Oorja Bio, Inc., a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company developing groundbreaking therapies for fibrotic and cardiopulmonary diseases, today announced the company's launch and $30 million in Series A financing from its founding investor, Westlake BioPartners. The funding will be used to advance the clinical development of ORJ-001, a first-in-class therapeutic to treat idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF), and build a pipeline of assets to address other diseases involving fibrosis or cardiopulmonary function. Oorja Bio has received IND clearance from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for clinical advancement of ORJ-001 and plans to initiate a Phase 2 clinical trial this year in IPF patients.

Oorja Bio acquired the global rights to ORJ-001 as part of the company's in-licensing strategy for therapeutic innovation in fibrosis. ORJ-001 is the first asset to be acquired by the company to build a portfolio of therapeutics that target the underlying pathophysiology of fibrotic diseases, filling a therapeutic gap for treatments that go beyond symptom management in this challenging disease area. ORJ-001 is a peptide therapeutic for subcutaneous administration designed to treat IPF by restoring the function of alveolar epithelial type 2 (AEC2) cells, promoting alveolar repair and reducing the inflammatory and fibrotic signaling that drives pulmonary fibrosis. In extensive preclinical studies in validated animal models of pulmonary fibrosis, ORJ-001 reversed established fibrosis and regenerated normal lung and alveolar morphology. In additional preclinical studies, ORJ-001 produced positive effects on biomarkers of tissue remodeling associated with fibrotic disease progression.

"Oorja Bio's founding team is very well positioned to accelerate promising drug assets and open up a new chapter for treating IPF and other fibrotic diseases – an area of long-standing challenge for drug development that lacks disease modifying therapies," said Beth Seidenberg, M.D., Founding Managing Director of Westlake BioPartners. "We look forward to continuing to work with the Oorja Bio team as they advance ORJ-001 in the clinic and build a pipeline to bring new therapies that can redefine the standard of care for patients with IPF and fibrotic diseases."

Oorja Bio is led by a founding team of biotechnology leaders, each with a track record of success in strategy, drug development, new treatment paradigms, and company building. Sujay Kango, Chief Executive Officer, and Janethe Pena, MD, PhD, Chief Medical Officer, worked together to lead the product strategy and clinical development of sotatercept at Acceleron Pharma, prior to the company's acquisition by Merck & Co. They were key leaders behind the innovative study designs, clinical implementation and regulatory path for sotatercept, a first-in-class, biologic medicine to treat pulmonary arterial hypertension (PAH), supporting its approval by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration as the first drug in ten years to be approved for the treatment of PAH.

- Sujay Kango, an accomplished biotechnology executive, was most recently the Chief Executive Officer of Tmunity Therapeutics, which was acquired by Gilead. Previously, he was Chief Commercial Officer of Acceleron Pharma, where he was responsible for commercialization and launch of the blockbuster therapy Reblozyl®, in addition to sotatercept. He currently serves on the board of Dianthus Therapeutics (Nasdaq: DNTH).

- Dr. Janethe Pena, a clinical development leader, was VP of Pulmonary Medical Research at Acceleron and then continued in a leadership cardiovascular role at Merck to bring sotatercept through the first BLA submission for FDA approval. She was VP of Pulmonary Clinical Development at Bayer where she worked on the pivotal trials leading to approval for Adempas® for two types of pulmonary hypertension.
- Connie Coulomb, Chief Business Officer of Oorja Bio, has 25 years of experience with a strong record of executing multiple strategic transactions and driving commercial successes. Ms. Coulomb has held global commercial leadership and drug product launch roles at Amgen, Biogen, Onyx Pharmaceuticals, and Merck & Co.

"Our team is energized to deliver on our goal of redefining the future of fibrotic diseases, beginning with ORJ-001," said Mr. Kango. "As we advance ORJ-001 in the clinic, we are embracing the paradigm shift in our biological understanding of IPF pathology that aligns with the central role of the alveolar epithelium. ORJ-001 was designed with this biology in mind and may provide, for the first time, a therapeutic intervention that repairs and reverses fibrosis and promotes disease modification."

About Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis
Idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF) is a chronic, progressive, and life-threatening lung disease affecting more than 150,000 adults in the United States. It is characterized by progressive fibrosis of lung tissue, leading to declining lung function, respiratory failure, and ultimately death. Although the biological triggers of IPF onset remain incompletely understood, impaired epithelial regeneration following lung injury is recognized as a key driver of disease pathogenesis. In particular, the central role of alveolar epithelial type 2 (AEC2) cells in maintaining and repairing the lung epithelium has been well established. IPF remains an area of significant unmet medical need. Currently approved therapies can slow disease progression but do not prevent the continued decline in lung function. As a result, prognosis remains poor, with an average life expectancy of three to five years after diagnosis.

About ORJ-001 and Targeting Alveolar Epithelial Type 2 (AEC2) Cells
ORJ-001 is a first-in-class peptide therapeutic for subcutaneous administration designed to treat idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF) by restoring the function of alveolar epithelial type 2 (AEC2) cells, promoting alveolar repair and reducing the inflammatory and fibrotic signaling that drives pulmonary fibrosis. It is an agonist of β1 integrin, a transmembrane protein that plays a critical role in AEC2 function within its cellular niche by transducing biochemical and mechanical signals from the extracellular matrix. β1 integrin activity is essential for regulating AEC2 cell fate, including senescence and differentiation into mature alveolar epithelial type 1 (AEC1) cells, which line the majority of the alveolar surface and are key to epithelial function. It also influences inflammatory signaling pathways implicated in fibrosis. Through these multimodal effects, ORJ-001 has the potential to both halt disease progression and promote repair of the fibrotic damage characteristic of IPF.

About Oorja Bio
Oorja Bio, Inc. is a clinical-stage biotechnology company developing groundbreaking therapies for idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF) and other fibrotic and cardiopulmonary diseases by targeting mechanisms underlying the pathophysiology of disease. ORJ-001, its lead drug candidate, is designed to restore function of alveolar epithelial type 2 (AEC2) cells to promote cellular repair and remodel fibrotic tissue. Oorja Bio was founded with initial investment from Westlake BioPartners. The company is based in in Houston, TX. For more information about Oorja Bio, visit www.oorjabio.com and follow us on LinkedIn.

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