



Rhythm Pharmaceuticals Announces Setmelanotide Granted Breakthrough Therapy Designation for Hypothalamic Obesity by the U.S. FDA

November 1, 2022

BOSTON, Nov. 01, 2022 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Rhythm Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (Nasdaq: RYTM), a commercial-stage biopharmaceutical company focused on transforming the lives of patients and their families living with hyperphagia and severe obesity caused by rare melanocortin-4 receptor (MC4R) pathway diseases, today announced that setmelanotide received Breakthrough Therapy Designation from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the treatment of hypothalamic obesity.

The FDA's Breakthrough Therapy Designation is designed to expedite development and review of medicines that aim to address a serious condition with an unmet medical need with preliminary clinical evidence indicating that the drug may demonstrate substantial improvement over existing treatments on one or more clinically significant endpoints.

"Breakthrough Therapy Designation marks a meaningful step in our effort to advance setmelanotide as quickly as possible for hypothalamic obesity, reflecting both the strength of our interim Phase 2 data and the significant need for a novel therapy that can transform the care of patients living with this rare, acquired obesity," said David Meeker, M.D., Chair, President and Chief Executive Officer of Rhythm. "We look forward to initiating a Phase 3 trial evaluating setmelanotide in hypothalamic obesity in early 2023."

Hypothalamic obesity is a rare, acquired form of extreme obesity that occurs following damage to the hypothalamic region of the brain, which includes the MC4R pathway and is responsible for controlling physiological functions such as hunger and weight regulation. It most frequently follows the growth or surgical removal of craniopharyngioma, astrocytoma or other rare brain tumors. Patients experience rapid weight gain, a reduction in energy expenditure and increase in hunger in the first six to 12 months following tumor resection, and ultimately develop severe obesity. Rhythm estimates there are approximately 5,000-10,000 patients living with acquired hypothalamic obesity in the United States, with approximately 500 new cases each year.

Breakthrough Therapy Designation was granted based on results from a Phase 2, 16-week clinical study of setmelanotide. Rhythm announced positive interim results from this trial in July 2022, with preliminary data showing that all 11 evaluable patients achieved a BMI decrease of more than 5 percent, with a mean reduction in BMI of 17.2%, at 16 weeks on setmelanotide therapy. The Company will present full data from this trial in a late-breaking poster presentation at The Obesity Society's ObesityWeek® 2022.

On Wednesday, November 2, 2022 at 8:30 a.m. ET (5:30 a.m. PT), Rhythm will host a conference call and webcast for investors to discuss full data from 18 patients enrolled in the Phase 2 clinical trial evaluating setmelanotide in hypothalamic obesity. To access the live conference call, participants may register [here](#).

Setmelanotide, an MC4R agonist marketed as IMCIVREE®, previously received Breakthrough Designation while being developed for Bardet-Biedl syndrome and proopiomelanocortin (POMC), proprotein convertase subtilisin/kexin type 1 (PCSK1) and leptin receptor (LEPR) deficiencies.

About Rhythm Pharmaceuticals

Rhythm is a commercial-stage biopharmaceutical company committed to transforming the lives of patients and their families living with hyperphagia and severe obesity caused by rare melanocortin-4 receptor (MC4R) pathway diseases. Rhythm's precision medicine, setmelanotide, is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for chronic weight management in adult and pediatric patients 6 years of age and older with monogenic or syndromic obesity due to pro-opiomelanocortin (POMC), proprotein convertase subtilisin/kexin type 1 (PCSK1) or leptin receptor (LEPR) deficiency confirmed by genetic testing, or patients with a clinical diagnosis of Bardet-Biedl syndrome (BBS). The European Commission (EC) has authorized setmelanotide for the treatment of obesity and the control of hunger associated with genetically confirmed BBS or genetically confirmed loss-of-function biallelic POMC, including PCSK1, deficiency or biallelic LEPR deficiency in adults and children 6 years of age and above.

The UK's Medicines & Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) authorized setmelanotide for the treatment of obesity and the control of hunger associated with genetically confirmed loss-of-function biallelic POMC, including PCSK1, deficiency or biallelic LEPR deficiency in adults and children 6 years of age and above. Additionally, Rhythm is advancing a broad clinical development program for setmelanotide in other rare genetic diseases of obesity and is leveraging the Rhythm Engine and the largest known obesity DNA database -- now with approximately 45,000 sequencing samples -- to improve the understanding, diagnosis and care of people living with severe obesity due to certain genetic deficiencies. Rhythm's headquarters is in Boston, MA.

Setmelanotide Indication

In the United States, setmelanotide is indicated for chronic weight management in adult and pediatric patients 6 years of age and older with monogenic or syndromic obesity due to POMC, PCSK1 or LEPR deficiency as determined by an FDA-approved test demonstrating variants in POMC, PCSK1 or LEPR genes that are interpreted as pathogenic, likely pathogenic, or of uncertain significance (VUS) or BBS.

In the European Union, setmelanotide is indicated for the treatment of obesity and the control of hunger associated with genetically confirmed Bardet-Biedl syndrome (BBS) or genetically confirmed loss-of-function biallelic pro-opiomelanocortin (POMC), including PCSK1, deficiency or biallelic leptin receptor (LEPR) deficiency in adults and children 6 years of age and above.

Limitations of Use

In the United States and Europe, Setmelanotide should be prescribed and supervised by a physician with expertise in obesity with underlying genetic etiology.

Setmelanotide is not indicated for the treatment of patients with the following conditions as setmelanotide would not be expected to be effective:

- Obesity due to suspected POMC, PCSK1 or LEPR deficiency with *POMC*, *PCSK1* or *LEPR* variants classified as benign or likely benign
- Other types of obesity not related to POMC, PCSK1 or LEPR deficiency, or BBS, including obesity associated with other genetic syndromes and general (polygenic) obesity.

WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS

Skin Monitoring: Setmelanotide may lead to generalized increased skin pigmentation and darkening of pre-existing naevi because of its pharmacologic effect. Full body skin examinations should be conducted annually to monitor pre-existing and new skin pigmentary lesions before and during treatment with setmelanotide.

Heart rate and blood pressure monitoring: Heart rate and blood pressure should be monitored as part of standard clinical practice at each medical visit (at least every 6 months) for patients treated with setmelanotide.

Prolonged penile erection: Spontaneous penile erections have been reported in clinical trials with setmelanotide. Patients who have a penile erection lasting longer than 4 hours should be instructed to seek emergency medical attention for potential treatment of priapism.

Depression: In clinical trials, depression has been reported in patients treated with setmelanotide. Patients with depression should be monitored at each medical visit during treatment with setmelanotide. Consideration should be given to discontinuing setmelanotide if patients experience suicidal thoughts or behaviors.

Pediatric Population: The prescribing physician should periodically assess response to setmelanotide therapy. In growing children, the impact of weight loss on growth and maturation should be evaluated. The prescribing physician should monitor growth (height and weight) using age- and sex-appropriate growth curves.

Excipients: This medicinal product contains 10 mg benzyl alcohol in each ml. Benzyl alcohol may cause allergic reactions. Patients who are pregnant or breastfeeding should be advised of the potential risk from the excipient benzyl alcohol, which might accumulate over time and cause metabolic acidosis. This medicinal product should be used with caution in patients with hepatic or renal impairment, because of the potential risk from the excipient benzyl alcohol which might accumulate over time and cause metabolic acidosis.

Sodium: This medicinal product contains less than 1 mmol sodium (23 mg) per dose, that is to say essentially “sodium-free.”

ADVERSE REACTIONS

The most frequent adverse reactions are hyperpigmentation (51%), injection site reaction (39%), nausea (33%), and headache (26%).

USE IN SPECIFIC POPULATIONS

Pregnancy

There are no data from the use of setmelanotide in pregnant women. Animal studies do not indicate direct harmful effects with respect to reproductive toxicity. However, administration of setmelanotide to pregnant rabbits resulted in decreased maternal food consumption leading to embryo-foetal effects. As a precautionary measure, setmelanotide should not be started during pregnancy or while attempting to get pregnant as weight loss during pregnancy may result in fetal harm. If a patient who is taking setmelanotide has reached a stable weight and becomes pregnant, consideration should be given to maintaining setmelanotide treatment as there was no proof of teratogenicity in the nonclinical data. If a patient who is taking setmelanotide and still losing weight gets pregnant, setmelanotide should either be discontinued, or the dose reduced while monitoring for the recommended weight gain during pregnancy. The treating physician should carefully monitor weight during pregnancy in a patient taking setmelanotide.

Breast-feeding

It is unknown whether setmelanotide is excreted in human milk. A nonclinical study showed that setmelanotide is excreted in the milk of nursing rats. No quantifiable setmelanotide concentrations were detected in plasma from nursing pups. A risk to the newborn/infant cannot be excluded. A decision must be made whether to discontinue breastfeeding or to discontinue/abstain from setmelanotide therapy taking into account the benefit of breastfeeding for the child and the benefit of therapy for the mother.

Fertility

No human data on the effect of setmelanotide on fertility are available. Animal studies did not indicate harmful effects with respect to fertility.

To report SUSPECTED ADVERSE REACTIONS, contact Rhythm Pharmaceuticals at +1 (833) 789-6337. See [Summary of Product Characteristics' APPENDIX V](#) for a list of European national reporting systems to communicate adverse reactions.

Please see the full Prescribing Information for additional Important Safety Information.

Forward-Looking Statements

This press release contains forward-looking statements within the meaning of the U.S. Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. All statements contained in this press release that do not relate to matters of historical fact should be considered forward-looking statements, including without limitation statements regarding the potential, safety, efficacy, and regulatory and clinical progress of setmelanotide, including with respect to the Phase 2 clinical trial evaluating setmelanotide in hypothalamic obesity and the anticipated timing of a Phase 3 trial, the potential benefits of setmelanotide for patients with hypothalamic obesity, our expectations surrounding potential regulatory submissions, approvals and timing thereof, our business strategy and plans, including regarding commercialization of setmelanotide and our participation in upcoming events and presentations. Statements using word such as “expect”, “anticipate”, “believe”, “may”, “will” and similar terms are also forward-looking statements. Such statements are subject to numerous risks and uncertainties, including, but not limited to, our ability to enroll patients in clinical trials, the design and outcome of clinical trials, the impact of competition, the ability to achieve or obtain necessary regulatory approvals, risks associated with data analysis and reporting, our liquidity and expenses, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our business and operations, including our preclinical studies, clinical trials and commercialization prospects, and general economic conditions, and the other important factors discussed under the caption “Risk Factors” in our Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended June 30, 2022 and our other filings with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. Except as required by law, we undertake no obligations to make any revisions to the forward-looking statements contained in this release or to update them to reflect events or circumstances occurring after the date of this release, whether as a result of new information, future developments or otherwise.

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Source: Rhythm Pharmaceuticals, Inc.