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**ZenBio, Inc. and Curl Bio, LLC. Awarded a Phase I SBIR Grant for the Development of Novel Anti-acne Therapeutics**

**RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK, NC** - ZenBio, Inc. announced that it has been awarded a Phase I SBIR grant to develop novel anti-acne therapeutics in collaboration with Curl Bio, LLC. The award from the National Institutes of Health will fund the development of a novel class of compounds leveraging Curl Bio's chemistry expertise and ZenBio's human sebocyte systems.

Acne Vulgaris is a common skin disorder that affects 80% of the population, including over 50 million people in the US with the majority being teenagers and young adults. A primary cause of acne is the overproduction of sebum by sebaceous glands. Unfortunately, the mechanisms that regulate sebum production are not clearly understood, and this has impeded the development of safe and effective sebosuppressive therapeutics. Current treatments, such as retinoids, while effective, have severe side effects, including clinical depression and birth defects, requiring these treatments to take part in a FDA-mandated registry program to limit risks of birth defects. "By working closely together and combining our expertise, we have identified a novel class of compounds that inhibit sebum production from human primary sebocytes, and we continue to build on these findings", stated Ben Buehrer, Ph.D., ZenBio's Vice President and Co-Principal Investigator of this program. ZenBio's ZenSkin<sup>®</sup> platform includes primary sebocytes, the key cell type in sebaceous glands responsible for secreting sebum, the oily/waxy substance that normally protects the skin but when dysregulated can lead to acne. Sarah Compton, Ph.D., Curl Bio's Director of Research and Development and the program's Co-Principal Investigator stated that "the structural basis for this class of sebosuppressive compounds is distinct from any other acne treatment and is unlikely to have the same serious side effects; a finding that was validated by our initial studies." The two companies plan to continue their collaboration by improving their existing compounds to create safe and effective anti-acne therapies.

**About ZenBio, Inc.**

**ZenBio, Inc.**, a privately held biotechnology company, is a leading provider of research tools for the study of human metabolic disease and skin-related disorders. Founded in 1995, the company performs contract research for major pharmaceutical, personal-care and biotechnology companies around the world. ZenBio established its ZenSkin<sup>®</sup> platform specifically to address the needs of dermatology researchers. The company provides full thickness skin, skin equivalents, skin-derived cells, related reagents and contract services to the biomedical research community. ZenBio also develops and commercializes research tools, and it leverages its expertise in this field as a contract research organization.

**About Curl Bio, LLC.**

**Curl Bio, LLC**, develops drugs for the interrelated set of disorders involving type II diabetes, obesity, metabolic syndrome and associated complications. Our current strategy for drug development uses a combination of phenotypic and molecular target driven approaches with core competencies in pancreatic islet technologies, fatty liver disease, and metabolic regulation in muscle tissue.



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