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Press Release

ARENA PHARMACEUTICALS, INC. ANNOUNCES LICENSING OF "OBESITY" ORPHAN RECEPTOR TARGET AND SMALL MOLECULE MODULATORS

CART "18F" Program is one of Arena's most advanced internal orphan receptor development programs

San Diego, California. January 31, 2001 /PRNewswire/ Arena Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (Nasdaq: ARNA; "Arena") today announced the signing of an expansion amendment to its May 29, 2000 research agreement with Taisho Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd. ("Taisho") by which Taisho has received world-wide rights to Arena's 18F Program. In addition to potential future milestone and full-time equivalent payments and royalties, Taisho will make a one-time payment to Arena for the 18F Program based upon work completed to date by Arena. Additional terms and payment amounts were not provided.

"18F" is the Arena code name for a human G protein coupled receptor (GPCR). Arena and Taisho believe that the 18F GPCR is a validated receptor target for the discovery of compounds for the anticipated treatment of metabolic diseases and disorders such as obesity. Compounds discovered by Arena based upon screening of its chemical compound library using the 18F receptor are also included within the scope of the expansion amendment. The 18F Program licensed to Taisho is one of Arena's most advanced internal orphan receptor programs. The CART-version of the 18F receptor, its use for screening and the chemical modulators of the 18F receptor discovered by Arena are all the subject of pending patent applications.

Because the natural activating protein, referred to as a "ligand," for the 18F GPCR has not yet been identified, the receptor is referred to by scientists as an "orphan" GPCR. Arena scientists determined that the 18F receptor is located within areas of the brain associated with feeding behavior and metabolism and thus were able to deduce the functional nature of this receptor. Using its proprietary CART Technology, Arena was able to screen its chemical library to discover small molecule modulators of the 18F receptor without the need for using the natural ligand for the 18F GPCR. Although preliminary, experiments using certain of the compound modulators in animal models has provided data indicating that animals that receive the compounds acutely, evidence a reduction in food intake, a decrease in body weight and an increase in the metabolism of fat.

"We believe that our 18F Program provides a strong indication of the power of our CART Technology", stated Jack Lief, Arena's President & CEO. Mr. Lief further noted that, "Although other groups are believed to have had access to this orphan receptor, we

believe that these organizations have taken the traditional approach to drug discovery and have been expending significant time and effort searching for the natural ligand to this receptor. By instead directly searching for potential drug candidates using a CART version of the 18F receptor, we believe that we have again highlighted the power of our proprietary CART Technology. We believe that our 18F deal with Taisho further validates this impression."

Arena's CART Technology allows for ligand-independent, direct identification of small molecule compounds that regulate the activity of G protein-coupled receptors. CART is particularly useful with respect to orphan GPCRs that are estimated to comprise approximately 2% of the human genome. Such ligand independent screening is made possible by genetic alteration of these receptors, using widely applicable and proprietary genetic cassettes. Arena has established CART collaborations with several pharmaceutical and biotechnology organizations.

Certain statements in this press release are forward-looking statements that involve a number of risks and uncertainties, and actual events or results may differ materially from Arena's expectations. Statements that are not historical facts, including statements which are preceded by, followed by, or that include the words "intends," "will", "plans", "expects", "anticipates", "estimates" and "believes" or similar statements are forward-looking statements. Important factors that could cause actual results to differ materially include, for example, the receipt of additional milestone payments, if any, from Taisho or any other Arena collaborator, the timing, success and cost of pre clinical research, out-licensing endeavors, clinical studies, other issues and the risk factors listed in Arena's SEC filings, including but not limited to its Form S-1 and Form 10-Q. These forward-looking statements represent the company's judgment as of the date of this release. The company disclaims, however, any intent or obligation to update these forward-looking statements.

"Arena Pharmaceuticals" and the corporate logo are registered U.S. trademarks of the company. "Arena" and "CART" are trademarks of the company. Arena's headquarters are located at 6166 Nancy Ridge Drive, San Diego, CA 92121, and its telephone number is (858) 453-7200. On the Internet, please refer to the Investor Relation's Center at Arena's website: <http://www.arenapharm.com> for further information.

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