

**For Immediate Release**

## **Orphagen Pharmaceuticals is Awarded a Phase I SBIR Grant for Discovery of Novel Therapeutics for Treatment of MS**

**San Diego, June 1, 2007—Orphagen announced today that it has received grant funding from the National Institutes of Neurological Disease and Stroke (NINDS), a component of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to investigate an entirely new class of therapeutic agent for treatment of multiple sclerosis (MS.)**

**Orphagen's grant funding derives from the SBIR (Small Business Innovation Research) program that supports exclusively small businesses that are majority-owned by individuals. The NINDS is an institute of the NIH which is in turn the premier funding source for innovative biomedical research in the U.S.**

**Orphagen's award is based on fundamental discoveries concerning regulation of a new class of helper T cell, the Th-17 cell, that has a critical regulatory and effector role in the immune response. Th-17 cells have been implicated in several forms of autoimmune and inflammatory disease, including IBD, psoriasis, multiple sclerosis, steroid-resistant asthma, and rheumatoid arthritis.**

**The description of the proposed research reads in part: "Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is a painful and crippling disease that affects an estimated 350,000 individuals in the U.S. alone. The incidence among women is twice that of men. The annual cost in terms of direct care and lost productivity has been estimated at \$7 billion/year. Therapeutic treatments for MS are limited and most have serious side effects. Recent basic medical research has described a novel actor in the immune system: a specialized immune cell that has a central causative**

role in animal models of MS. By developing drugs that selectively target this new category of immune cell, we have the opportunity to develop safer therapies for MS.”

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