



## Versantis Closes CHF 16M Series B Financing Round to Advance Clinical Development of Novel Therapeutics for Liver Diseases

**Funds will fuel the completion of ongoing Phase 1b studies with VS-01 and advance its clinical development up to clinical proof-of-efficacy (phase 2a) in 2 indications**

**Zurich, Switzerland, September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019** – Versantis, a clinical-stage biotech company developing disruptive therapies for rare liver and pediatric diseases, today announces the successful completion of an oversubscribed CHF 16 million Series B financing round. Swisscanto Invest by Zürcher Kantonalbank led the financing and was joined by Esperante Ventures and investiere, as well as new private investors. Existing investors Redalpine HealthEquity, and Zürcher Kantonalbank Start-up Finance also participated in this round. Earlier in the year, Versantis started a first-in-human clinical trial with VS-01, a multi-organ supporting therapy for liver cirrhosis. The proceeds from this new financing will be mainly used to assess the safety of VS-01 after multiple doses and establish its clinical proof of concept in the decompensated liver cirrhosis indication as well as in the rare Acute-on-Chronic Liver Failure (ACLF) patient population.

“Since the launch of Versantis, we have matured and successfully translated our unique technology into a potentially lifesaving therapy, now being evaluated in cirrhotic patients. This financing is yet another validation of the important work accomplished by the whole Versantis team,” said Dr. Vincent Forster, CEO and co-founder of Versantis. “We are thrilled to receive the support and partnership from this group of top-tier life science investors to help us achieve our mission. With this funding, we aim to demonstrate VS-01 clinical benefit and position Versantis as a key pioneer in the care of serious liver diseases.”

Dr. Meriam Kabbaj, COO and co-founder of Versantis commented: “The Series B closing coincides with the regulatory clearance and initiation of Versantis’ first in human study, one of the most important milestones the company has achieved so far, in order to assess the safety of VS-01 in cirrhotic patients with ascites and mild hepatic encephalopathy. This

funding is pivotal to support clinical development towards proof of efficacy in two indications of high unmet medical need. It highlights our commitment to soon transform the lives of patients with liver disease and their families.”

With the closing of this financing round, Dr. Robert Schier, Investment Director PE/VC Health-Tech at Swisscanto Invest, will join Versantis’ Board of Directors, chaired by Peter Nicklin, a senior healthcare executive and entrepreneur.

“We are excited to join Versantis as a lead investor on its journey to develop and launch a novel therapy, which could have significant impact for a growing number of patients with liver diseases. Swisscanto Invest is convinced about the unique clinical approach, the rigorous planning and execution of the project and the key stakeholders of the company as an excellent basis of success.” stated Dr. Schier. “The company has a good momentum and the therapy fills a big and underserved medical need,” added Dr. Sidler, Redalpine.

Dr. Pareras from HealthEquity commented: “This is a really great moment; the company is now at the clinical stage and we are all aware of the importance of the clinical need that Versantis is addressing. If successful, many patients will benefit, and we really look forward to helping guide the company as it progresses through clinical development. We congratulate Vincent Forster and Meriam Kabbaj for their great leadership.”

### [About Swisscanto Invest by Zürcher Kantonalbank](#)

Proven specialists develop high-quality investment and pension solutions for private investors, companies and institutions under the Swisscanto Invest by Zürcher Kantonalbank brand. With its Swisscanto Invest by Zürcher Kantonalbank brand, the Zürcher Kantonalbank group is one of Switzerland's largest fund providers. It is known for its pioneering role in sustainable investments and its funds regularly achieve national and international recognition. [www.swisscanto.ch](http://www.swisscanto.ch).

### [About Redalpine](#)

Redalpine is an early stage investor focusing on disruptive and highly scalable business models. Their aim is to help talented entrepreneurs turn their visions into reality. To foster entrepreneurial success, Redalpine provides financial backing as well as relevant know-how and a reliable network. Redalpine focuses on European Life-Science and ICT start-ups.

### [About HealthEquity](#)

HealthEquity is a Spanish venture capital firm investing in early-stage companies in the healthcare sector, with a special focus on biotechnology and medical devices. Founded by

the Barcelona Medical Association and the financial group Riva y Garcia, HealthEquity is looking for projects to bring successful innovative life science companies to the marketplace and to foster the Catalan and Spanish biotech ecosystem.

### About Versantis

Versantis is a clinical-stage biotech company focused on the development of orphan drugs in liver diseases and pediatric inborn errors of metabolism. Founded by leading scientists from ETH Zurich and industry experts, Versantis is pursuing innovative therapies for the acute care of serious liver conditions based on its proprietary liposomes-based detoxification platform technology. Its lead candidate, VS-01, uses a disruptive route to enhance the clearance of ammonia and other toxins from the body. The company's mission is to bring therapeutic solutions to many patients in need by timely supporting acute decompensations of cirrhosis (Versantis' most advanced program) as well as rare hyperammonemic genetic disorders in children. VS-01 is currently being evaluated in first-in-human clinical trials, with outcomes expected mid-2020. VS-01 was granted orphan drug designations in acute liver failure by the EMA and in ACLF by the FDA, which will streamline its clinical development pathway. Versantis is headquartered in Zurich, Switzerland. For additional information, visit: [www.versantis.ch](http://www.versantis.ch).

### About Decompensated Cirrhosis

Globally 850 million people live with a liver disease and 2 million die every year. In addition to traditional hepatitis and alcohol-related liver diseases, recent years have seen a rising prevalence of fatty liver diseases (NAFLD/NASH), which today affect 1 out of 4 Americans and Europeans and are becoming the dominant drivers of decompensated cirrhosis and liver transplantations. Most cirrhotic patients eventually decompensate, requiring hospitalization due to complications such as hepatic encephalopathy (HE) or acute-on-chronic liver failure (ACLF, a rare disease). As of today, no drugs are approved to support such cases which are associated with high mortality if not medically managed early. By reversing HE and the multi-organ failure cascade of ACLF, VS-01 aims to urgently fill this medical gap.

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