

Press
Release

Pioneering project for pharmaceuticals – Vifor Pharma and the University of Basel are jointly establishing the world’s first research professorship for Nanopharmaceutical and Regulatory Science

Public-private partnership is intended to safeguard Switzerland’s competitive position in pharmaceutical technologies of the future

Zurich and Basel, 26 May 2019

Nanopharmaceuticals promises ground-breaking innovation in the development of medicines:

- The Vifor Pharma Group is endowing two professorships for Nanopharmaceutical and Regulatory Science at the University of Basel
- The commitment by Vifor Pharma and the University of Basel is aimed at ensuring Switzerland has the specialist knowledge and equipment needed to compete globally in this important emerging area of life sciences
- With this decision, Vifor Pharma is demonstrating its commitment to Switzerland as a world-leading location for pharmaceutical research and development

Nanomedicines are playing an increasingly important role in the development of innovative new medications. These drugs are able to overcome specific cellular barriers in the human body with a view to targeting their effect even more precisely. Nanopharmacy therefore promises to help advance medical science and bring significant benefit to patients.

At present, however, researchers are only just beginning to acquire the in-depth scientific insights needed for a fundamental understanding of the development of nanomedicines, their applications and especially the regulatory requirements for their approval across Europe and worldwide. Likewise, there is a lack of experts with the necessary specialist knowledge – and these experts are urgently needed in industry, at regulatory authorities and in medical practice, including in Switzerland. As with other areas of cutting-edge research, this will take the form of a global race: those able to present findings as quickly as possible will be able to assert themselves as a centre of excellence in nanopharmaceuticals.

Spread over 10 years, the commitment of CHF 10 million by the Vifor Pharma Group is intended to establish the field of nanopharmacy research at the University of Basel and to support the training of corresponding experts. The newly-created professorships in Nanopharmaceutical and Regulatory Science will be based at the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences. There are also plans to establish and develop an internationally renowned Excellence Platform for the development, authorisation and application of nanopharmaceuticals, as well as the training of experts in the field.

Vifor Pharma views its contribution as start-up funding for this Excellence Platform, which is supported and jointly endorsed by stakeholders from academia, industry and public authorities. The aim is for the platform to both focus on research and teaching, and also to seek out international partnerships, organise conferences and incorporate additional sponsors with a view to becoming a leading international centre for nanopharmacy. “In order to make rapid progress in nanopharmaceuticals, we’re reliant on clear and scientifically sound parameters for authorisation and patient safety,” says Etienne Jornod, Executive Chairman of the Board of Directors at Vifor Pharma. “The field of

nanopharmacy is growing quickly, and it's important to secure a leading position in this innovative area of medicine with the help of qualified experts. That's why we want to help ensure that Switzerland establishes a strong research foundation in this emerging area of pharmaceutical development."

For the University of Basel, this collaboration marks an important step in the further development of its life sciences focal area. "We're proud to be able to develop this promising field of research in collaboration with a major industrial partner," says Professor Andrea Schenker-Wicki, President of the University of Basel. "The crucial thing here is that we're not only developing the scientific foundations, but also training the experts who will take this knowledge with them into industry and public authorities." It is, she says, a key step for Basel and Switzerland in terms of their ability to compete on the international stage.

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Vifor Pharma Group is a global pharmaceuticals company headquartered in Switzerland. It aims to become the global leader in iron deficiency, nephrology and cardio-renal therapies. The company is the partner of choice for pharmaceuticals and innovative patient-focused solutions. The Vifor Pharma Group strives to help patients around the world with severe and chronic diseases lead better, healthier lives. The company develops, manufactures and markets pharmaceutical products for precision patient care. The Vifor Pharma Group holds a leading position in all its core business activities and consists of the following companies: Vifor Pharma; Vifor Fresenius Medical Care Renal Pharma (a joint company with Fresenius Medical Care); Relypsa; and OM Pharma. The Vifor Pharma Group is listed on the Swiss Stock Exchange (SIX Swiss Exchange, VIFN, ISIN: CH0364749348). For more information, please visit www.viforpharma.com.

In Switzerland Vifor Pharma has four production and research & development sites where the vast majority of medications are produced. Together with company headquarters, these sites employ over 1,300 people in Switzerland. The affiliate Vifor Pharma Switzerland is operating out of Villars-sur-Glâne in the French speaking part of the country.

The **University of Basel** has an international reputation of outstanding achievements in research and teaching. Founded in 1460, the University of Basel is the oldest university in Switzerland and has a history of success going back over 550 years.

As a comprehensive university offering a wide range of high-quality educational opportunities, the University of Basel attracts students from Switzerland and the entire world, offering them outstanding studying conditions as they work towards their bachelor's, master's or PhD degrees. Today, the University of Basel has around 13,000 students from over a hundred nations, including 2,800 PhD students. The University of Basel has seven faculties covering a wide spectrum of academic disciplines. At the same time, the university has positioned itself amidst the international competition in the form of five strategic focal areas: Life Sciences, Visual Studies, Nanosciences, Sustainability and Energy Research and European and Global Studies. In international rankings, the University of Basel is regularly placed among the 100 top universities in the world thanks to its research achievements.

The University of Basel has deep roots in the economically powerful and culturally rich Basel region. The university also works closely with domestic and international partners to make relevant contributions to the advancement of the sciences and society. This also means that the University of Basel pays particular attention to aspects of sustainability, equal opportunity and knowledge transfer.