Pacira BioSciences Announces First Patient Dosed in Phase 2 Study Evaluating Safety and Efficacy of PCRX-201 for the Treatment of Osteoarthritis of the Knee

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-- Novel, locally administered gene therapy designed to boost cellular production of anti-inflammatory protein IL-1Ra in the knee --

-- Initial topline results from two-part, randomized, double-blind, active-controlled study expected late 2026 --

BRISBANE, Calif., April 03, 2025 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Pacira BioSciences, Inc. (Nasdaq: PCRX), the industry leader in its commitment to deliver innovative, non-opioid pain therapies to transform the lives of patients, today announced the first patient has been dosed in the Phase 2 ASCEND study of PCRX-201 (enekinragene inzadenovec) for the treatment of osteoarthritis, or OA, of the knee. PCRX-201 features an innovative design based on the company's proprietary high-capacity adenovirus, or HCAd, gene therapy vector platform. It is injected locally into the knee joint to boost cellular production of interleukin-1 receptor antagonist (IL-1Ra), and block interleukin-1 pathway activation to improve chronic inflammation, pain, and function. PCRX-201's unique design also features an inducible promoter to mimic the body's natural response to inflammation by "turning on" the expression of IL-1Ra when inflammation is present in the joint and turning off expression once inflammation is quelled.

"We are excited to advance PCRX-201 into Phase 2 clinical development as it marks an important milestone on our 5x30 path to growth and value creation, as well as our transition into an innovative biopharmaceutical organization," said Frank D. Lee, chief executive officer of Pacira. "There is a significant need for innovation in the treatment of OA of the knee, as current therapies are based on decades-old mechanisms and only provide up to three to six months of relief. In our large Phase 1 study, a single intra-articular injection of PCRX-201 was well tolerated and demonstrated unprecedented pain relief and durability across all levels of OA severity for at least two years. PCRX-201 has the potential to address the underlying chronic inflammatory processes that contribute to OA joint degeneration over time, with local administration that is contained in the joint – delivering medicine where it matters."

Study Design
The two-part, multicenter ASCEND study will involve approximately 135 patients, 45 to 80 years old with painful OA of the knee at a Kellgren-Lawrence (K-L) Grade of 2, 3 or 4. Subjects will be randomly assigned to a treatment dose group and stratified by K-L Grade, a semiquantitative method for evaluating the severity of OA on a scale of 0-4.

ASCEND will evaluate two doses of PCRX-201, Dose A is 1.4×10^{10} genome copies (GC) and Dose B is 1.4×10^{11} GC. Patients will be randomized 1:1:1 to Dose A, Dose B or saline. All cohorts will receive concurrent pretreatment with an intraarticular corticosteroid (methylprednisolone 40 mg), a technique common in gene therapy dosing to improve tolerability and gene transfer.

Part A of the study will randomize approximately 45 patients and Part B will randomize approximately 90 patients. The drug product used in Part B of the study will be manufactured using the company's newly developed, suspension-based batch manufacturing process intended for commercial scale-up. Pacira expects to report topline results from Part A of the study before the end of 2026.

For both Parts A and B of the study, the primary endpoint is the number and percent of treatment-emergent adverse events, adverse events of special interest, and serious adverse events for PCRX-201 plus steroid pretreatment versus saline plus steroid pretreatment from Week 1 through Week 52. The study's secondary and exploratory endpoints include efficacy assessments such as changes in pain and physical function from baseline at Weeks 38 and 52. Efficacy will be measured using the Numerical Rating Scale (NRS); the Western Ontario and McMaster Universities Index (WOMAC), and the Knee Injury and Osteoarthritis Outcome Score (KOOS). Biomarkers, including structural endpoints, as well as immunogenicity and biodistribution will also be evaluated and all subjects will be followed for 5 years.

About PCRX-201
Pacira's novel product candidate PCRX-201 (enekinragene inzadenovec), features an innovative design based on the company's proprietary high-capacity adenovirus vector platform. It is currently being studied in the fundamental, underlying chronic inflammatory processes that contribute to "wear and tear" over time in osteoarthritis of the knee, a condition that affects more than 14 million individuals in the U.S. today.

In November 2024, Pacira reported promising data from a large Phase 1 study in which PCRX-201 provided sustained improvements in knee pain, stiffness, and function through two years following local administration, with a well-tolerated safety profile. These data were presented at the American College of Rheumatology's annual ACR Convergence meeting at the

American College of Rheumatology meeting. PCRX-201 has received Regenerative Medicine Advanced Therapy (RMAT) designation from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and Advanced Therapy Medicinal Products (ATMP) designation from the European Medicines Agency. RMAT and ATMP are regulatory programs designed to expedite the development and review processes for promising therapies targeting a significant unmet need with preliminary clinical evidence indicating that the therapy has the potential to offer a major advantage over existing treatments. PCRX-201 is the first gene therapy to achieve these clinical results and earn these regulatory designations in osteoarthritis of the knee – a testament to its promise and potential.

About the High-capacity Adenovirus Vector Platform
In February 2025, in support of the company's '5x30' growth strategy, Pacira acquired GQ Bio Therapeutics and its novel high-capacity adenovirus (HCAd) vector gene therapy vector platform. This platform solves many of the challenges in the field of gene therapy that have prevented its utilization in treating common diseases, such as osteoarthritis.

Key features include:

- The HCAd vector is much more efficient at delivering genes into cells compared to many other gene therapies that rely on adenovirus associated virus, or AAV, vectors. As a result, the desired effect can be achieved with much smaller doses.
- The vector used in the HCAd platform can carry up to 30,000 base pairs of DNA, which enables gene therapy with multiple or larger genes compared to AAV vectors.
- Genetic medicines based on the HCAd platform can be administered locally and have the potential for redosing at therapeutically appropriate intervals.
- Lower dose levels and efficient delivery of genes into cells means that thousands of doses can be produced in a single batch. As a result, therapies built on the HCAd platform are expected to have a commercially attractive and viable cost of goods profile.

Beyond PCRX-201 and other product candidates in preclinical development, the company has identified numerous well-validated cytokines that could also be the basis for locally administered genetic therapies using the HCAd platform.

About Pacira
Pacira delivers innovative, non-opioid pain therapies to transform the lives of patients. Pacira has three commercial-stage non-opioid treatments: EXPAREL® (bupivacaine liposome injectable suspension), a long-acting local analgesic currently approved for infiltration, fascial plane block, and as an interscalene brachial plexus nerve block, an adductor canal nerve block, and a sciatic nerve block in the popliteal fossa for postsurgical pain management; ZILRETTA® (triamcinolone acetonide extended-release injectable suspension), an extended-release, intra-articular injection indicated for the management of osteoarthritis knee pain; and iovera®°, a novel, handheld device for delivering immediate, long-acting, drug-free pain control using precise, controlled doses of cold temperature to a targeted nerve. The Company is also advancing the development of PCRX-201, a novel, locally administered gene therapy with the potential to treat large prevalent diseases like osteoarthritis. To learn more about Pacira, visit www.pacira.com.

Forward-Looking Statements
Any statements in this press release about Pacira's future expectations, plans, trends, outlook, projections and prospects, and other statements containing the words "believes," "anticipates," "plans," "estimates," "expects," "intends," "may," "will," "would," "could," "can" and similar expressions, constitute forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the "Exchange Act"), and the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995, including, without limitation, statements related to: the settlement described herein, '5x30', our growth and business strategy; our future outlook, our intellectual property and patent terms, our growth and future operating results and trends, our strategy, plans, objectives, expectations (financial or otherwise) and intentions, future financial results and growth potential, including our plans with respect to the repayment of our indebtedness, anticipated product portfolio, development programs, development of products, strategic alliances and other statements that are not historical facts. For this purpose, any statement that is not a statement of historical fact should be considered a forward-looking statement. We cannot assure you that our estimates, assumptions and expectations will prove to have been correct. Actual results may differ materially from those indicated by such forward-looking statements as a result of various important factors, including risks relating to, among others: the failure to realize the anticipated benefits and synergies from the acquisition of GQ Bio Therapeutics GmbH; risks associated with acquisitions, such as the risk that the acquired businesses will not be integrated successfully, that such integration may be more difficult, time-consuming or costly than expected or that the expected benefits of the transaction will not occur; our manufacturing and supply chain, global and U.S. economic conditions (including inflation and rising interest rates), and our business, including our revenues, financial condition, cash flow and results of operations; the success of our sales and manufacturing efforts in support of the commercialization of EXPAREL, ZILRETTA and iovera°; the rate and degree of market acceptance of EXPAREL, ZILRETTA and iovera°; the size and growth of the potential markets for EXPAREL, ZILRETTA and iovera° and our ability to serve those markets; our plans to expand the use of EXPAREL, ZILRETTA and iovera° to additional indications and opportunities, and the timing and success of any related clinical trials for EXPAREL, ZILRETTA and iovera°; the commercial success of EXPAREL, ZILRETTA and iovera°; the related timing and success of U.S. Food and Drug Administration supplemental New Drug Applications and premarket notification 510(k)s; the related timing and success of European Medicines Agency Marketing Authorization Applications; our plans to evaluate, develop and pursue additional product candidates utilizing our proprietary multivesicular liposome ("pMVL") drug delivery technology; the approval of the commercialization of our products in other jurisdictions; clinical trials in support of an existing or potential pMVL-based product; our commercialization and marketing capabilities; our ability to successfully complete capital projects; the outcome of any litigation; the recoverability of our deferred tax assets; assumptions associated with contingent consideration payments; assumptions used for estimated future cash flows associated with determining the fair value of the

Company; the anticipated funding or benefits of our share repurchase program; and factors discussed in the "Risk Factors" of our most recent Annual Report on Form 10-K and in other filings that we periodically make with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "SEC"). In addition, the forward-looking statements included in this press release represent our views as of the date of this press release. Important factors could cause actual results to differ materially from those indicated or implied by forward-looking statements, and as such we anticipate that subsequent events and developments will cause our views to change. Except as required by applicable law, we undertake no intention or obligation to update or revise any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise, and readers should not rely on these forward-looking statements as representing our views as of any date subsequent to the date of this press release.

These forward-looking statements involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors that may cause our actual results, levels of activity, performance or achievements to differ materially from those expressed or implied by these statements. These factors include the matters discussed and referenced in the "Risk Factors" of our most recent Annual Report on Form 10-K and in other filings that we periodically make with the SEC.

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