



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Prexa Pharmaceuticals Obtains \$7.0 million in Series B Financing

- Funds to bring lead CNS product candidate through Phase 1b studies -

Boston, Massachusetts, May 11, 2011 –Prexa Pharmaceuticals, a biotechnology company developing therapies for central nervous system (CNS) diseases and disorders, today announced it has secured \$7.0 million in a Series B financing. The round was led by Advent Healthcare Ventures and also included Shire Pharmaceuticals as a new investor. Proceeds from the financing will allow the company to complete IND-enabling studies through Phase 1b clinical studies for its lead product candidate PRX-12251.

Prexa was co-founded by Advent in 2006, and has previously raised \$3.1 million in a Series A equity capital financing. The Company is developing oral small molecule monoamine reuptake inhibitors that act most potently at the dopamine transporter. By safely enhancing dopamine activity, and to a lesser extent norepinephrine activity, Prexa intends to improve upon the safety and efficacy of current treatments for ADHD, depression and Parkinson’s disease.

“We are excited about Shire’s participation in this round of financing, and are pleased that they share our confidence in Prexa’s unique approach to treating CNS diseases and disorders,” said Charles Cohen, Ph.D., Partner at Advent Healthcare Ventures and Chairman and CEO of Prexa. “We are targeting indications that we believe have an unmet need and we now have the funding in place, and an experienced management team on board to advance the development of Prexa’s lead product candidate.”

Many CNS diseases and disorders have been associated with impaired neurotransmission of the serotonin, norepinephrine, and dopamine pathways. However, most pharmacologic treatments aim to enhance only serotonin and/or norepinephrine. Many patients do not adequately respond to these products, are dissatisfied with their side effects, or feel they respond too slowly. Prexa’s lead compound, PRX-12251, is a triple reuptake inhibitor (TRI) that blocks dopamine, norepinephrine and serotonin transporters, with the greatest potency on the dopamine transporter.

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“There is a strong body of clinical evidence to suggest that preferentially targeting dopamine, with less potent effects on serotonin and norepinephrine, may provide clinical advantages to treating certain CNS disorders. We believe that agents with this pharmacology offer the potential for improved efficacy and safety in various psychiatric and neurological conditions,” said Scott Reines, M.D., Ph.D., Chief Medical Officer of Prexa. “We are pleased to have the support of Advent and Shire, and expect that our capital efficient structure will allow these funds to take PRX-12251 through Phase 1 clinical studies that include characterization of its pharmacodynamic effects in human brain.”

About Prexa Pharmaceuticals

Prexa Pharmaceuticals is developing a pipeline of early stage products with primary action on the neurotransmitter dopamine, potentially providing new alternatives to treating CNS diseases and disorders such as ADHD, depression and Parkinson’s disease. The Company’s lead product candidate, PRX-12251, is a unique, dopamine-preferring triple reuptake inhibitor and is entering IND-enabling studies. Prexa’s product pipeline also includes mono and dual reuptake inhibitors which are targeted for partnerships with leading biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies. Learn more at www.prexainc.com

About Advent Healthcare Ventures

Advent Healthcare Ventures is a life science and healthcare venture capital firm focused on private company investments in the biopharmaceutical, medical device and healthcare services industries. Founded in 2007 by a team of accomplished investment professionals spun out of the leading private equity firm Advent International, the Advent Healthcare Ventures investment team has extensive and complementary industry backgrounds including expertise in pharmaceutical research and discovery technologies as well as clinical/medical, business development and operations management. www.adventhealthcareventures.com

About Shire

Shire’s strategic goal is to become the leading specialty biopharmaceutical company that focuses on meeting the needs of the specialist physician. Shire focuses its business on attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), human genetic therapies (HGT) and gastrointestinal (GI) diseases as well as opportunities in other therapeutic areas to the extent they arise through acquisitions. Shire’s in-licensing, merger and acquisition efforts are focused on products in specialist markets with strong intellectual property protection and global rights. Shire believes that a carefully selected and balanced portfolio of products with strategically aligned and relatively small-scale sales forces will deliver strong results. More information can be found at: www.shire.com

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