

Astellas Announces a Collaboration with YASKAWA to Create an Innovative Cell Therapy Ecosystem through the Integration of Pharmaceutical and Robotics Technologies

*- Focuses on digitizing cell manufacturing processes through robotics
technology*

TOKYO, May 21, 2024 - Astellas Pharma Inc. (TSE: 4503, President and CEO: Naoki Okamura, “Astellas”) today announced that it signed a memorandum of understanding with YASKAWA Electric Corporation (YASKAWA) to begin discussions on the creation of an innovative cell therapy ecosystem through the integration of pharmaceutical and robotics technologies. This memorandum is legally non-binding and will lead to further specific discussions between the two companies in the future.

The complexity of product manufacturing is a significant challenge to commercializing cell therapy. Substantial investments are required to develop complex manufacturing processes, transfer technology among manufacturers, and establish large-scale manufacturing facilities for commercialization. This makes it difficult for startups and academia to commercialize cell therapy independently.

Since the end of 2017, Astellas has been advancing drug discovery and manufacturing technology research in cell therapy through the introduction of the humanoid robot “Maholo”, developed by the Robotic Biology Institute, a subsidiary of YASKAWA.

Under the terms of the memorandum, the companies will begin discussions to potentially develop a platform that may seamlessly link early-stage research to commercialization, utilizing the state-of-the-art Maholo robot to manufacture high-quality products and shorten the R&D period of cell therapy.

Furthermore, the companies would consider the possibility of potentially offering the use of the platform to startups and academia, aiming to develop an advanced cell therapy ecosystem that may enable the discovery and nurturing of innovation while potentially reducing investment in investigational drug manufacturing based on the Pharmaceutical and Medical Device Act*¹.

Astellas would provide cell manufacturing technology, clinical development and regulatory insights related to cell therapy. YASKAWA would provide and develop state-of-the-art robotics and factory automation technologies.

Astellas is committed to achieving our VISION of being “on the forefront of healthcare change, turning innovative science into VALUE for patients”. With this potential partnership, Astellas would further contribute to startups and academia working on cell therapy to deliver cutting-edge cell therapy products with the potential to be innovative treatments to patients.

The impact of this memorandum on Astellas’ financial results for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025, is expected to be minor.

YASKAWA announces “Yaskawa Partners with Astellas Pharma on Building a Cell Therapy Platform Combining Robotics and Pharmaceutical Technologies” on the same day.

*1 Pharmaceutical and Medical Device Act: Act on Securing Quality, Efficacy and Safety of Products Including Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices

About Astellas

Astellas Pharma Inc. is a pharmaceutical company conducting business in more than 70 countries around the world. We are promoting the Focus Area Approach that is designed to identify opportunities for the continuous creation of new drugs to address diseases with high unmet medical needs by focusing on Biology and Modality. Furthermore, we are also looking beyond our foundational Rx focus to create Rx+® healthcare solutions that combine our expertise and knowledge with cutting-edge technology in different fields of external partners. Through these efforts, Astellas stands on the forefront of healthcare change to turn innovative science into VALUE for patients. For more information, please visit our website at <https://www.astellas.com/en>.

Cautionary Notes

In this press release, statements made with respect to current plans, estimates, strategies and beliefs and other statements that are not historical facts are forward-looking statements about the future performance of Astellas. These statements are based on management’s current assumptions and beliefs in light of the information currently available to it and involve known and unknown risks and uncertainties. A number of factors could cause actual results to differ materially from those discussed in the forward-looking statements. Such factors include, but are not limited to: (i) changes in general economic conditions and in laws and regulations, relating to pharmaceutical markets, (ii) currency exchange rate fluctuations, (iii) delays in new product launches, (iv) the inability of Astellas to market existing and new products effectively, (v) the inability of Astellas to continue to effectively research and develop products accepted by customers in highly competitive markets, and (vi) infringements of Astellas’ intellectual property rights by third parties. Information about pharmaceutical products (including products currently in development) which is included in this press release is not intended to constitute an advertisement or medical advice.

###

Contacts for inquiries or additional information:

Astellas Pharma Inc.
Corporate Communications & IR
+81-3-3244-3201