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Santhera Enrolls Last Patient in Pivotal US Phase III with SNT-MC17/Idebenone in Friedreich's Ataxia

Liestal, Switzerland, October 31, 2008 – Santhera Pharmaceuticals (SIX: SANN), a Swiss specialty pharmaceutical company focused on neuromuscular diseases, announced today that it has closed the recruitment for its six month pivotal Phase III trial with SNT-MC17 (INN: idebenone) in Friedreich's Ataxia in the United States. The two study centers at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and the School of Medicine of the University of California, Los Angeles, have enrolled a total of 70 patients. The strong support from patient advocacy groups was instrumental in considerably exceeding the original recruitment target of 51 individuals.

The IONIA (Idebenone effects On Neurological ICARS Assessments) trial is a double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled study of six months duration investigating the efficacy of two doses of SNT-MC17/idebenone compared to placebo. The primary endpoint is the change in the International Cooperative Ataxia Rating Scale (ICARS), a neurological scale, where the difference between baseline and end of treatment for each of the dosing groups will be compared with the change in the placebo group. The IONIA study also investigates additional neurological endpoints as well as activities of daily living parameters and cardiac outcomes. The study protocol incorporates advice provided by the US Food and Drug Administration under Special Protocol Assessment. The six month treatment period will be followed by a one month follow-up period. As of today, more than twenty patients have already completed the trial and are enrolled into an open label extension study on the high dose level.

"The completion of the enrollment for our pivotal Phase III trial in the United States is an important milestone in the development of SNT-MC17/idebenone for Friedreich's Ataxia," said Klaus Schollmeier, Chief Executive Officer of Santhera. "Patient organizations and clinical investigators have been tremendously supportive in the recruitment for this trial. Their extra effort reflects the significant unmet medical need in this rare disease. We believe that the IONIA trial will confirm the drug's efficacy and that Catena® has the potential to be the first approved medicine in the treatment of Friedreich's Ataxia in the United States."

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About Friedreich's Ataxia

Friedreich's Ataxia is a rare but severe genetic neuromuscular disorder that results in the degeneration of an individual's nerve and muscle tissue. This disorder causes loss of muscle

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control, uncoordinated movements, muscle wasting and thickening of heart walls which frequently leads to a shortened life span. Friedreich's Ataxia affects both Caucasian males and females equally and it is estimated that about 20,000 patients suffer from the disease in both North America and Europe. Average life expectancy for Friedreich's Ataxia patients is limited to approximately 35 to 50 years.

The disorder results from a genetic defect in the gene encoding for *frataxin*. Reduced levels of this protein ultimately result in impaired energy production in mitochondria, the cells' energy production centers, and elevated oxidative stress. Tissues that have the highest need for energy, in particular nerve and cardiac tissues, are primarily affected by *frataxin* deficiency resulting in pathological changes in heart muscle anatomy and function and loss of nerve cells.

About Santhera

Santhera Pharmaceuticals (SIX: SANN) is a Swiss specialty pharmaceutical company focused on the discovery, development and commercialization of small-molecule pharmaceutical products for the treatment of severe neuromuscular diseases, an area of high unmet medical need which includes many orphan indications with no current therapy. Santhera currently investigates three compounds in five clinical-stage development programs. The Company's first product, SNT-MC17 (INN: idebenone), has received a marketing approval with conditions from Health Canada to treat Friedreich's Ataxia and is marketed under its brand name CATENA®. The product is also under review by health authorities in the EU and in Switzerland, while in the United States, a pivotal Phase III trial is recruiting patients. The compound has also shown efficacy in a Phase II clinical trial as a potential treatment for Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. For further information, please visit the Company's website www.santhera.com.

CATENA® is a trademark of Santhera Pharmaceuticals, registered in Canada and the United States.

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