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## **OTHERA PHARMACEUTICALS AND THE NATIONAL EYE INSTITUTE REACH TARGET ENROLLMENT IN DRY AMD CLINICAL TRIAL WITH OT-551 EYE DROPS**

*Othera's lead compound is being tested in 10 patients with bilateral (both eyes) Geographic Atrophy (GA), a severe form of dry age-related macular degeneration (AMD). AMD is the leading cause of blindness in America in persons over age 55 and the dry form represents nearly 90% of all AMD cases*

**Exton, PA, June 18, 2007 – Othera Pharmaceuticals, Inc.** today announced that an open label clinical study of OT-551 in patients with bilateral Geographic Atrophy (GA) has reached its enrollment target of 10 patients. OT-551 is Othera's lead small molecule topical eye drop currently in development for treating the dry and wet forms of age-related macular degeneration (AMD) and cataracts. OT-551 could represent the first effective treatment for GA, a chronic, degenerative disease which currently affects about 1 million elderly Americans.

Patients with bilateral GA have an advanced form of dry AMD in both eyes. Previous studies by the NEI have demonstrated patients with bilateral GA are at significantly elevated risk of experiencing rapid, debilitating vision loss as a result of either continued progression of dry AMD, or conversion to the wet form of the disease. Patients in the National Eye Institute - sponsored study being conducted at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland are receiving OT-551 eye drops three times per day for 24 months. The study is designed to evaluate OT-551's potential to reduce the loss in central visual acuity and to slow enlargement of the atrophic area in the macula.

"Results from this study will be among the first to indicate the potential role of OT-551 in treating the progressive damage to the retina and irreversible vision loss associated with geographic atrophy," said Al Reaves, PhD, Senior VP of Clinical Development with Othera.

### **About OT-551**

Othera's lead compound, OT-551, is an eye drop currently in mid-stage Phase 2 clinical development. In addition to planned and ongoing studies in both the dry and wet forms of AMD, Othera is evaluating OT-551 in a Phase 2 trial for cataract prevention. OT-551 is a small molecule that acts through multiple pathways to downregulate the disease-induced overexpression of nuclear factor kappa B (NF- $\kappa$ B; a key player in human inflammatory disease) and to reduce oxidative stress. In preclinical models, OT-551 has demonstrated anti-oxidative, anti-inflammatory and anti-angiogenic activity, which supports development in diseases of the eye, such as AMD and cataracts where these mechanisms play a key role.

## **About Othera Pharmaceuticals**

Othera Pharmaceuticals, Inc. is a privately-held, specialty pharmaceutical company located in Exton, PA. Othera is designing and developing small molecule products with novel mechanisms of action for ophthalmic and other indications. In ophthalmics, Othera is developing topical eye drop products for age-related diseases, including some of the leading causes of blindness. Othera is also engaged in the discovery of a novel set of orally-administered compounds to address severe medical conditions including cancer and chronic inflammatory diseases. Othera's second lead compound, OT-730, is a novel improved beta-blocker in preclinical development for the treatment of glaucoma. More information on Othera Pharmaceuticals is available on the company's website at [www.othera.com](http://www.othera.com).

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