



## Aura Biosciences Closes \$21M Series B Financing

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CAMBRIDGE, Mass.—([BUSINESS WIRE](#))—Aura Biosciences, a biotech company developing highly tumor-targeted breakthrough therapies for rare cancers, has secured a \$21M Series B round of funding. The financing was led by Advent Life Sciences, with participation from new investors, Chiesi Ventures, Ysios Capital, and Alexandria Venture Investments. Existing investors, including LI-COR Biosciences and Henri Termeer, former Chief Executive Officer of Genzyme, also participated in the financing. The financing will be used to advance Aura's unique and novel therapies into clinical trials for the treatment of rare cancers of the eye, and to further develop for additional cancer indications its first-in-class technology that was discovered and developed in partnership with Dr. John Schiller at the National Cancer Institute (NCI).

"Our investors share our vision and our conviction that our technology will uniquely enable the development of breakthrough therapies for orphan cancers that have no effective treatments," said Elisabet de los Pinos, founder and CEO of Aura Biosciences. "Our lead product is focused on treating ocular cancers that are life-threatening, yet for which patients have no targeted or FDA-approved therapies available. We are dedicated to bringing to this patient population first-in-class therapies that can both eliminate the tumor and preserve vision."

Aura Biosciences' platform is based on viral nanoparticles, a new class of drugs that harness the potential of a unique cell targeting for the treatment of cancer. The technology was discovered and developed in partnership with Dr. John Schiller's lab at the National Cancer Institute (NCI). Dr. Schiller is the recipient of the National Medal of Technology and Innovation by President Obama, the nation's highest honor for technological achievement.

The nanoparticles demonstrate highly selective targeting of solid tumors and metastases while leaving normal epithelium untouched. Aura's lead product incorporates a viral nanoparticle conjugated with a potent cell-killing laser-activated molecule (IRDye 700DX, LI-COR Biosciences) that is delivered efficiently and selectively to cancerous cells, thereby reducing or eliminating the risk of non-specific activity and/or undesirable toxicity. Aura Biosciences and the NCI have generated a considerable body of data in vitro and in vivo that shows highly selective tumor uptake in multiple animal models and provides a strong preclinical validation of the technology platform.

"Aura Biosciences is developing first-in-class drugs for rare ocular cancers that can improve patient outcomes and positively impact patient lives," said Dale Pfost, general partner at Advent Life Sciences. "The data generated from Aura's platform suggests that there is great potential to treat ocular cancers in a completely novel way with high tumor specificity along with maximal drug and laser penetration that can eliminate tumors with no damage to other ocular structures."

"There is a tremendous unmet need for therapies that can help those with rare diseases," said Henri Termeer, former Chief Executive Officer of Genzyme, a pioneer in drug development for orphan indications. "With Aura's technology, once the product is confirmed in the clinic, patients with rare ocular cancers will have for the first time and in the near future a non-invasive targeted therapy available to them."

In conjunction with the financing, Dale Pfost, General Partner at Advent Life Sciences, Art Pappas, CEO of A.M. Pappas & Associates, and Joël Jean-Mairet, Managing Partner at Ysios Capital will join Aura's Board of Directors. Current Board member Alan Walts, former head of Genzyme Ventures, will become Executive Chairman. In addition, Alison Lawton, former Genzyme executive and former COO of OvaScience, will be appointed as Chief Operating Officer.

### About Aura Biosciences

Aura Biosciences is applying nanotechnology to the fight against cancer. Its novel viral nanoparticle technology, developed in partnership with the National Cancer Institute (NCI), harnesses the potential of viral evolution and tumor targeting for the treatment of cancer. For more information, visit [www.aurabiosciences.com](http://www.aurabiosciences.com).

### About Advent Life Sciences

Advent Life Sciences is one of Europe's leading venture teams investing in life sciences businesses. The team consists of professionals with extensive scientific, medical and operational experience, and a long-standing track record of entrepreneurial and investment success across the UK, Europe and the US. The firm invests in a range of sectors within life sciences, principally in new drug discovery, enabling technologies and med tech. Realizations in the last three years include Algeta, Avila, CN Creative, EUSA and Micromet. Current investments include Acutus, Biocartis, Cellnovo, f2G, NeRRe, and Versartis. For more information, please visit [www.adventls.com](http://www.adventls.com).

### About Chiesi Ventures

Chiesi Ventures is a venture capital firm focused on the area of rare and orphan disorders. Our goal is to complement the strategic interest of the Chiesi Group by investing in early stage development opportunities. Chiesi Ventures also aim to accelerate the expansion of the Chiesi network in the US among universities, venture capital investors, rare disease patient organizations and entrepreneurial companies developing treatments for rare diseases. For more information, please visit [www.chiesiventures.com](http://www.chiesiventures.com).

### About Ysios Capital

Ysios Capital is a leading Spanish venture capital firm that provides private equity financing to early- and mid-stage human healthcare and life science companies with a special focus on pharmaceuticals, diagnostics and medical devices. Founded in 2008, Ysios Capital has € 118 million in assets under management distributed over two funds. The second fund has a target size of € 100 million and will remain open to new investors until September 2015. For further information see [www.ysioscapital.com](http://www.ysioscapital.com)

### About Alexandria Venture Investments

Alexandria Venture Investments is the strategic venture capital arm of Alexandria Real Estate Equities, Inc. (NYSE: ARE). Founded in 1994, Alexandria is the largest and leading investment-grade real estate investment trust (REIT) focused principally on owning, operating, and developing high-quality, sustainable real estate for the broad and diverse life science and technology industries. In 1996, Alexandria founded Alexandria Venture Investments to actively invest at the cutting edge of novel, breakthrough discoveries in biopharmaceuticals, diagnostics, research tools, medical devices, digital health, and technology. Alexandria is uniquely positioned to fund life science and advanced technology companies based on its experience and in-depth understanding of these industries, its long-term relationships with leading investors, and its world-class international scientific advisory network. For more information, please visit [www.are.com](http://www.are.com).

**About LI-COR Biosciences**

LI-COR Biosciences is a leading manufacturer of near-infrared and chemiluminescence imaging platforms, analysis software, and IRDye® infrared dye reagents for drug discovery, life science research, and pre-clinical imaging. Founded in 1971, the privately held company is based in Lincoln, Nebraska.

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