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AstraZeneca has announced that it has entered into a definitive agreement to acquire ZS Pharma, a biopharmaceutical company based in San Mateo, California. ZS Pharma uses its proprietary ion-trap technology to develop novel treatments for hyperkalaemia (high potassium levels), a serious condition of elevated potassium in the bloodstream, typically associated with chronic kidney disease (CKD) and chronic heart failure (CHF).

The transaction will give AstraZeneca access to the potassium-binding compound ZS-9, a potential best-in-class treatment for hyperkalaemia, a condition associated with increased mortality in CKD and CHF. ZS-9 is under regulatory review by the US Food and Drug Administration with a Prescription Drug User Fee Act goal date of 26 May 2016. A submission for European Marketing Application Authorization is planned by the end of 2015. Current estimates for global peak year sales of ZS-9 exceed \$1 billion.

Mr Pascal Soriot, CEO of AstraZeneca, said, "Hyperkalaemia can be a life-threatening condition for patients with chronic kidney disease and chronic heart failure, however the risk is underappreciated and prevalence is increasing. This acquisition complements our strategic focus on Cardiovascular and Metabolic Disease by adding a potential best-in-class treatment to our portfolio of innovative medicines. We look forward to welcoming the ZS Pharma team to AstraZeneca."

Under the terms of the agreement, AstraZeneca will acquire all of the outstanding capital stock of ZS Pharma for \$90 per share in an all-cash transaction, or approximately \$2.7 billion in aggregate transaction value.

Upon completion, ZS Pharma, which has around 200 employees across three sites in California, Texas and Colorado, will become a wholly owned subsidiary of AstraZeneca.

Mr Robert Alexander, CEO, ZS Pharma, said, "This agreement will allow us to maximize the potential of ZS-9, drawing on AstraZeneca's long-standing expertise in developing and commercializing medicines for cardiovascular and metabolic diseases. We look forward to joining AstraZeneca and to working together to bring this important treatment for hyperkalaemia to the global market, helping to meet an important unmet medical need for patients."