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California-based Anthera Pharmaceuticals Inc. has announced receipt of a termination notice from its development partner in Japan, Zenyaku, terminating the December 2014 Collaboration and License Agreement. Zenyaku Kogyo is a privately-held Japanese pharmaceutical company headquartered in Tokyo, Japan. The termination will come into effect from effective January 7, 2016.

According to the release, the termination was 'At Will' and alleged no breach of the License Agreement by Anthera. At the time of the notification, no patients had been enrolled in any blisibimod clinical studies in the Zenyaku territory and Zenyaku had not purchased any blisibimod product from Anthera.

"Progress of blisibimod in Japan, particularly for IgA nephropathy, has been disappointing," said Paul F Truex, Anthera's President and Chief Executive Officer. "Zenyaku's termination of the License Agreement will provide flexibility for us to pursue a potentially optimized development path for blisibimod in IgA nephropathy and facilitate discussions with alternative partners in Asia at the appropriate time. As a result of our financing efforts over the past twelve months, including Zenyaku's substantial equity investments and cost reimbursements, we remain well funded to advance the development of blisibimod and Sollpura."

As previously disclosed, Anthera entered into a collaboration and license agreement with Zenyaku in December 2014. The License Agreement required Zenyaku, subject to mutually agreed timelines, to develop and commercialize blisibimod in Japan. Prior to the notification of termination Zenyaku purchased $9.0 million of Anthera common stock at a thirty-percent premium to a trailing market price.

"Regaining full worldwide control of blisibimod development, and in particular the IgA nephropathy program, is exciting as we are now free to consider additional approaches including the potential examination of the clinical data from the BRIGHT-SC study at an earlier time point than originally planned," said Anthera's Chief Medical officer, Dr. Colin Hislop. "The BRIGHT-SC study remains fully blinded and will continue as planned with all currently enrolled patients continuing to follow the protocol."