

March 15, 2021

Sojitz Corporation

Sojitz Invests in VLP Therapeutics, Inc., a U.S. Developer of  
Next-generation Vaccines

Sojitz Corporation (“Sojitz”) has invested in VLP Therapeutics, Inc. (Head Office: Gaithersburg, Maryland, U.S.; CEO: Wataru Akahata; “VLPT”), a U.S. biotechnology company conducting R&D of vaccines for Covid-19, malaria, dengue fever, and cancer. Sojitz will acquire stake in the company through a third-party allotment of shares via VLPT’s Series A round.

VLPT was established in 2013 with the mission to develop innovative medical treatments that transform traditional vaccine therapies in order to address unmet global medical needs. The company’s CEO, Dr. Wataru Akahata, founded VLPT after serving as a senior researcher at the Vaccine Research Center at the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH). Utilizing Dr. Akahata’s proprietary platform technology of virus-like particles (VLPs),\*<sup>1</sup> VLPT conducts R&D of therapeutic vaccines for cancer treatment, as well as preventative vaccines for infectious diseases such as malaria, dengue fever, and Covid-19. Through this funding, Sojitz will help speed R&D of VLPT’s therapeutic vaccines for cancer treatment in the U.S., with the aim of accelerating clinical trials and practical application of these vaccines.

VLP Therapeutics Japan, LLC (Head Office: Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo; CEO: Wataru Akahata), a fully-owned subsidiary of VLPT, is currently working on R&D of a Covid-19 vaccine that utilizes self-amplifying RNA (replicon) technology\*<sup>2</sup> with the support of funding received from the Japan Agency for Medical Research and Development in 2020.

The revolutionary vaccines developed by VLPT help to treat cancers and provide immunization against malaria, dengue fever, and other infectious diseases. These vaccines contribute greatly to the fight against new threats such as Covid-19, with the capability to save millions of lives. VLPT’s vaccines are anticipated to provide major advancements in medical care to support healthy living. Sojitz strives to develop healthcare services that support the health, happiness, and prosperity of people around the world. Going forward, Sojitz will continue to pursue partnerships

with start-ups offering promising technologies and services to create new businesses with a global reach.

\*1: Virus-like particles (VLPs): Harmless particles that have the same outer shell and shape of a native virus but do not contain any genetic material. Administering VLPs with the same shape as the target virus triggers an immune response for the body to create antibodies to neutralize the virus.

\*2: Self-amplifying RNA (replicon) technology: A vaccine technology that enables Covid-19 spike antigens to be amplified within the body through inoculation of just the spike protein, providing a strong immune response with just a small dosage.

[Related Information]

[Company Overview – VLP Therapeutics, Inc.]

Established	2013
Location	Gaithersburg, Maryland, U.S.
Representative Director	Wataru Akahata CEO
Main Business	R&D of vaccines for infectious diseases such as COVID-19, malaria, and dengue; R&D of therapeutic vaccines for cancer treatment Website: <a href="https://vlptherapeutics.com/">https://vlptherapeutics.com/</a>

[For questions regarding this press release, contact:]

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