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Benitec MOU with CalbaTech Inc.

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Benitec Ltd has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with California-based CalbaTech Inc to provide stem cell storage services for US HIV patients who may use the healthy adult stem cells in future therapy. Benitec has collaborated with City of Hope, a biomedical research and treatment centre, in the development of a possible HIV therapeutic. This investigational HIV therapeutic creates the possibility that an adult stem cell based therapeutic may be able to take the place of anti-retroviral medication. Early banking of adult stem cells by HIV sufferers may be very prudent if a stem cell therapy is approved by the FDA after the conclusion of clinical trials. This potential therapy surrounds a newly discovered possible way in which to fight HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, with genetically modified adult stem cells. The potential therapeutic may emerge as the first to use specially engineered, HIV-fighting genes that are inserted into patients' own harvested adult stem cells. After re-infusion into the patient, the new treatment may allow patients' bodies to produce HIV-resistant white blood cells indefinitely. Benitec's MOU with CalbaTech would provide, in the short term, that Benitec would receive fees for stem cell storage performed by CalbaTech's subsidiary, TherapyStem Inc. In the longer term, both Benitec and CalbaTech are encouraged that this potential new therapeutic will develop an effective HIV therapeutic that relies on healthy adult stem cells. CalbaTech believes that, in the future, as this potential therapeutic develops, TherapyStem will be able to treat the cells that have been banked by HIV patients and send those treated cells to a patient's treating physician for re-injection. CalbaTech would pay to Benitec a fee for using the protocols developed for the treatment of the stem cells. CalbaTech's new subsidiary, TherapyStem Inc, has created a patent-pending, process to harvest stem cells from HIV infected individuals to be cryopreserved for future transplantation into a client for medical purposes. Benitec is an Australian biotechnology company focused on licensing its extensive intellectual property portfolio and developing therapeutics to treat serious diseases using its proprietary ddRNAi technology. CalbaTech Inc is an emerging life sciences company concentrating on providing products and platforms to the research market for biotech and pharmaceutical companies and to academic institutions.

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