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April 1, 2026

To whom it may concern:

Company Representative	D.Western Therapeutics Institute, Inc. Yuichi Hidaka, President and CEO (Code No. 4576; TSE Growth)
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Announcement regarding the commencement of a joint research project aimed at creating novel therapeutics for ophthalmic diseases using lactic acid bacteria-derived exosomes (Extracellular Vesicles: EVs)

D.Western Therapeutics Institute, Inc. (the “Company”) and LAB Biotech Co., Ltd. (Head Office: Sapporo, Hokkaido; President and Representative Director: Atsushi Murakami; hereinafter “LAB Biotech”) hereby announce that they have entered into an agreement for a joint research project (the “Joint Research”) aimed at creating therapeutics for ophthalmic diseases using lactic acid bacteria-derived exosomes (extracellular vesicles).

Lactic acid bacteria are known to provide health benefits, including the regulation of intestinal conditions, modulation of immune function, and alleviation of allergic symptoms. They are widely used in the food, supplement, and pharmaceutical industries. On the other hand, Extracellular Vesicles (EVs), which are released by cells into the external environment, are nano-sized particles composed of a lipid bilayer (Note 1). In recent years, EVs have attracted attention as they are implicated in many important biological functions, including immune regulation and inflammation control.

In the Joint Research, the Company will work on developing therapeutics for ophthalmic diseases using EVs derived from lactic acid bacteria (hereinafter, “lactic acid bacteria-derived EVs”) that are possessed by LAB Biotech. The lactic acid bacteria-derived EVs purified by LAB Biotech have been confirmed to exhibit anti-inflammatory effects in their research, and higher purification levels have been shown to increase anti-inflammatory activity. In ophthalmology, inflammation is implicated in the pathogenesis of many diseases, and controlling it is considered an important therapeutic approach.

In the Joint Research, LAB Biotech will provide candidate lactic acid bacteria-derived EVs, and the Company will utilize its accumulated evaluation technologies in the ophthalmology field to conduct pharmacological efficacy studies and other tests, thereby verifying their potential as therapeutics for ophthalmic diseases.

There will be no change to the earnings forecast for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2026, as a result of this matter; however, this initiative aims to create therapeutics for ophthalmic diseases using a new modality and is considered to contribute to the expansion of the Company’s pipeline.

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About LAB Biotech Co., Ltd.

LAB Biotech is a Hokkaido University-certified startup that conducts all processes from the exploration of novel lactic acid bacteria to product commercialization. The company currently possesses 900 proprietary strains of lactic acid bacteria and is advancing multiple related projects. In particular, it focuses on lactic acid bacteria-derived exosomes (EVs) released extracellularly by lactic acid bacteria, has established purification technologies for these EVs, and is characterized by its ability to provide a variety of highly purified EVs derived from its proprietary lactic acid bacteria.

For details, please refer to the company's website (<https://lab-biotech.co.jp/>).

Glossary**(Note 1) Lipid bilayer**

This refers to a cell membrane composed of lipids arranged in two layers that covers the outside of the cell. This membrane regulates the movement of specific substances into and out of the cell while maintaining the cell's internal environment.