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To whom it may concern:

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Conclusion of Four-Party Joint Research Agreement with AIST Group, Keio University, and REPROCELL, Inc. to "Establish Optimal Transport and Storage Conditions for Regenerative Medical Products"

TOHO HOLDINGS CO., LTD. (Headquarters: Tokyo; Representative Director, CEO and CFO: Hiromi Edahiro, hereinafter "TOHO HOLDINGS") is pleased to announce that it has concluded a four-party joint research agreement with the AIST Group (National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (AIST) and AIST Solutions Co.), Keio University, and REPROCELL, Inc. for the "establishment of optimal transport and storage conditions for regenerative medical products" as follows:

1. Background of the Joint Research Agreement

As a corporate group active in the medical, healthcare and nursing care fields, TOHO HOLDINGS is engaged in pharmaceutical wholesaling, dispensing pharmacy, manufacturing and sales of pharmaceuticals, and the development and provision of customer support systems under the corporate slogan "Total Commitment to Good Health." The Group has made it its social mission to ensure "safe and secure distribution of pharmaceuticals." In order to provide a stable supply of pharmaceuticals that require special management during the distribution process, such as regenerative medical products and orphan drugs, we are upgrading logistics centers and developing the SALM Solution System, which combines cutting-edge logistics systems and the constant-temperature transportation device SALM, which can handle transportation in a wide range of temperatures. We also established a cooperative research laboratory with the AIST Group in April 2023 and are conducting joint research with the aim of realizing universal medical access[*1].

The AIST group, one of the largest public research institutes in Japan, focuses on the creation and practical application of technologies useful to Japanese industry and society as well as on the transfer of innovative technological ideas for commercialization and their social implementation. It also conducts R&D from a central and pioneering position in the national innovation ecosystem, based on changes in the environment surrounding innovation and national strategies formulated in light of such changes.

Keio University School of Medicine provides tumor-infiltrating lymphocyte therapy (TIL therapy[*2]) for patients with advanced cervical cancer. TIL therapy was considered suitable as a Type 3 Regenerative Medicine Provision Plan by the Keio University Specific Accreditation Committee for Regenerative Medicine and was approved as an advanced medicine by the Advanced Medical Council of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

Meanwhile, REPROCELL was established in 2003 as a biotech venture company originating from Kyoto University and the University of Tokyo. Positioning TIL therapy as an important pipeline for regenerative medical products, the company is actively conducting R&D in collaboration with Keio University School of Medicine. In November 2024, REPROCELL resumed to provide TIL therapy together with Keio University School of Medicine.

TIL therapy and other regenerative medical products using cell products require strict temperature control and quality maintenance during the transport and storage process from manufacturing sites to medical institutions due to their characteristics. In order to create a stable supply system for the dissemination and future commercialization of TIL therapy, it is essential to establish optimal transport and storage conditions.

Against this background, information exchange among the four parties started in November 2024, and we have now signed a joint research agreement to embark on full-scale research. In this joint research, the AIST Group will verify cell viability under various environments using TIL specimens provided by Keio University School of Medicine, and REPROCELL will provide the knowledge it has cultivated in the manufacture of cell preparations for TIL therapy and other therapies. TOHO HOLDINGS will verify future transport means and provide information on the current transport environment to establish optimal transport and storage conditions.

Through participation in this joint research, the Group will encourage our employees to deepen their knowledge of regenerative medical products on their own and expand and strengthen the functions necessary for handling specialty products, thereby actively promoting the development of full-line services as set forth in the Medium-Term Management Plan and the action plan for the implementation thereof, and establishing a firm position as an indispensable player in the distribution of pharmaceuticals.

2. Period of Joint Research

November 29, 2024 to March 31, 2026

3. Role of Each Party in Research

Keio University School of Medicine:	Provision of surplus specimens when TIL therapy is performed and related ancillary services
REPROCELL:	Provision of the knowledge of cell manufacturing
The AIST group:	Verification of changes in cell viability under multiple environments
TOHO HOLDINGS:	Verification of transport means of surplus specimens that will contribute to future transport of cell preparations and provision of information on the current transport environment

*1 Universal medical access:

A system that allows everyone to provide high quality medical and nursing care without anxiety, regardless of the skill level of the medical or nursing personnel. It also refers to the highest level of medical accessibility, which allows people to access necessary and sufficient medical and nursing care regardless of where they live, even in the event of a disaster or emergency

*2 TIL therapy:

TIL therapy is a type of adoptive immunotherapy in which tumor-infiltrating lymphocytes (TILs) from a patient's own cancer tissue are collected, cultured in large quantities outside the body, and then re-infused into the patient.