



Organon, Ligand Confirm Full, On-Schedule Start of AVINZA(R) Co-Promotion

**-- Companies Expect to Achieve No. 2 Share of Voice in \$2.8 Billion Marketplace
 With More than 800 Sales Representatives --**

Roseland, NJ and San Diego, CA; April 9, 2003 - Organon, a business unit of Akzo Nobel (Nasdaq: AKZOY), and Ligand (Nasdaq: LGND) have begun full co-promotion of Ligand's AVINZA(R) (morphine sulfate extended-release capsules), the first true once-daily opioid for chronic, moderate-to-severe pain, with more than 800 sales representatives in the United States, the companies announced today.

"We are very pleased to begin co-promotion of AVINZA with the full strength of Organon's 550 primary care, 180 specialty and 100 hospital representatives," said Michael Novinski, president of Organon Pharmaceuticals USA Inc. "We are confident that our strong relationships in primary care, anesthesiology, hospitals and managed care will help us establish AVINZA as a best-in-class product in a large, growing market. Representatives in all three of our sales forces have been thoroughly trained and certified on the product, have been equipped with the necessary promotional materials, and are excited to show what they can do."

Organon's hospital representatives and national accounts team began promoting AVINZA on March 10. The company's primary care and specialty sales forces began promotion this week. In addition, Ligand is promoting AVINZA with its expanding specialty pain sales force of nearly 70 representatives. Organon and Ligand expect AVINZA to rapidly achieve the No. 2 share of voice in the sustained-release opioid marketplace with their combined sales force of more than 800 representatives, plus appropriately scaled investments in other medical marketing categories over the next several quarters. Organon and Ligand's combined sales force effort is approximately 12-fold greater than what Ligand alone could dedicate to the product.

"Initiating full co-promotion so rapidly reflects the focus and priority that Organon and Ligand have placed on AVINZA, and the synergy and camaraderie that has developed between our organizations," said David E. Robinson, chairman, president and chief executive officer of Ligand. "While it is too early to expect a significant acceleration of AVINZA's weekly prescriptions, now that full co-promotion is underway and we have the capability to call upon nearly 30,000 primary care physicians and specialists, we expect the second and third quarters to reflect significant further market share gains in this market of more than 13 million prescriptions, though the pace of these gains remains uncertain."

Over the long term, Organon and Ligand's shared goal is to capture at least 10% of the growing sustained-release opioid marketplace. In 2003, the companies' priorities are to drive prescription growth by educating physicians about AVINZA's once-daily product profile and benefits, to expand acceptance among managed care organizations, and to facilitate patient access by increasing stocking in retail pharmacies to at least 15,000 pharmacies during the second quarter.

About AVINZA

In March 2002, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration granted marketing approval for AVINZA for the once-daily treatment of moderate-to-severe pain in patients who require continuous, around-the-clock opioid therapy for an extended period of time. Ligand launched the product in mid-2002. Organon and Ligand announced their co-promotion partnership on February 24, 2003.

AVINZA competes in the sustained-release opioid marketplace, which grew 20% in 2002 to approximately \$2.8 billion (including generic, sustained-release morphine). Despite this growth, studies indicate that as many as 30-85% of select chronic pain patients still are undertreated.

Full prescribing information for AVINZA may be obtained in the U.S. from Ligand Professional Services by calling toll free 800-964-5836 or on Ligand's web site at www.ligand.com.

About Organon

Organon USA Inc., headquartered in Roseland, NJ, is the U.S. affiliate of N.V. Organon, a renowned international ethical pharmaceutical company. Organon maintains a strong commitment to health care, conducting research in the areas of psychiatry, contraception, fertility, anesthesiology, thrombosis, immunology, osteoporosis prevention and treatment of post-menopausal symptoms.

Organon is one of the business units of Akzo Nobel. Headquartered in The Netherlands, Akzo Nobel N.V. (NASDAQ: AKZOY) is a market-driven and technology-based company, serving customers throughout the world with health care products, coating

and chemicals. Consolidated sales for 2002 totaled \$15.05 billion (EUR 14 billion). The company currently employs over 68,000 people in more than 80 countries.

About Ligand

Ligand discovers, develops and markets new drugs that address critical unmet medical needs of patients in the areas of cancer, skin diseases, men's and women's hormone-related diseases, osteoporosis, metabolic disorders, and cardiovascular and inflammatory diseases. Ligand's proprietary drug discovery and development programs are based on its leadership position in gene transcription technology, primarily related to Intracellular Receptors (IRs) and Signal Transducers and Activators of Transcription (STATs). For more information, see www.ligand.com.

Caution Regarding Forward-Looking Statements

This news release contains certain forward-looking statements by Ligand and Organon that involve risks and uncertainties and reflect the companies' judgment as of the date of this release. These statements include those related to co-promotion; sales, market, market share, stocking and prescription growth; product potential, acceptance and success; share of voice and the number of sales representatives. Actual events or results may differ from the companies' expectations. For example, there can be no assurance that co-promotion will be successful or that AVINZA sales will meet expectations. Additional information concerning these and other risk factors affecting Ligand's and Organon's businesses can be found in prior press releases as well as in the companies' public periodic filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission, available via the companies' respective internet sites. Ligand and Organon disclaim any intent or obligation to update these forward-looking statements beyond the date of this release. This caution is made under the safe harbor provisions of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995.

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