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Vertero Unveils New Strategic Direction Focused on Breaking Barriers in Neurodegenerative Diseases

Formerly Axial Therapeutics, Vertero is rapidly advancing a novel approach to address peripheral drivers of challenging neurodegenerative diseases

Lead candidate VT-5006 is a first-in-class small molecule designed to precisely engage a validated target in the GI wall to slow the progression of Parkinson's disease

\$20M Series D financing supports Vertero's near-term goals and plans for pipeline expansion

WOBURN, Mass., Oct. 21, 2025 – Axial Therapeutics today announced that it has rebranded as Vertero Therapeutics, a biotechnology company breaking barriers in neurodegenerative disease treatment. The new identity reflects the Company's mission to transform the perception and treatment of neurodegenerative diseases to delay progression and preserve quality of life for patients as long as possible.

Since its founding in 2016 out of Caltech, the Company has pioneered science beyond the brain to pinpoint and treat validated upstream peripheral drivers of neurodegenerative diseases. Vertero's goal is to deliver effective, safe oral therapeutics that can help preserve patient functionality and independence, ultimately transforming long-term outcomes.

“Our unique expertise is in the interplay between the brain and the peripheral nervous system, and our groundbreaking research has put us on a path to change the way we think about treating neurodegenerative diseases, starting with Parkinson's disease,” said Stewart Campbell, Ph.D., CEO of Vertero. “As we embark on this new chapter, together with new funding partners and a focused, rapidly advancing pipeline, Vertero is well positioned to pursue our ambition to address the significant burden of these diseases and, ultimately, to redefine the outlook for affected individuals and their loved ones.”

Vertero is building a focused pipeline of novel, oral small molecule therapeutics for peripheral drivers of neurodegenerative diseases, aiming to bring new hope to affected communities. Vertero's lead candidate, VT-5006, is a first-in-class, gut-selective small molecule designed to delay onset, slow progression and preserve quality of life for people with Parkinson's disease, with strong safety and efficacy signals in preclinical studies. The program is on track to initiate a Phase 1 clinical study in Q4 2025.

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“With growing scientific appreciation for the connections between brain diseases and targets across the periphery, we are pursuing novel targets through which we can intervene early and modify the course of neurodegenerative diseases, rather than focusing solely on symptom management,” said Becca Senter, Ph.D., Vertero’s Chief Scientific Officer. “With a rigorous, data-driven approach, we identified and validated a causative upstream driver of Parkinson’s disease, and then designed VT-5006 as a targeted, oral therapeutic to address the disease at a key peripheral source. We believe this represents an opportunity to change the treatment paradigm in a profound way, preserving patients’ well-being and independence far longer than possible today.”

Vertero raised \$20 million in Series D funding in 2025 to facilitate the evolution of the company and accelerate Vertero’s advancement into the clinic. The round included both new and existing investors, including OneVentures, Seventure, and private family investment offices, among others. Proceeds from the Series D financing will be used to advance the VT-5006 program through Phase 1b clinical trials and prepare for Phase 2, support ongoing drug discovery efforts and pipeline expansion, and grow the Company’s operational and R&D capacity.

About Vertero

Vertero Therapeutics is pioneering science beyond the brain to treat neurodegenerative diseases at their source. Vertero’s development pipeline of differentiated therapies targets the peripheral nervous system to delay onset and slow progression of challenging conditions such as Parkinson’s disease. The company’s lead program, VT-5006, is designed to precisely treat a validated target in the gut that feeds the protein aggregation and inflammation implicated in Parkinson’s disease. Vertero is preparing to initiate a Phase 1 clinical trial of VT-5006. The company also has an asset targeting bile acid dysregulation in early development for undisclosed indications. For more information, visit www.vertero.com or LinkedIn.

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