



atai Life Sciences Awarded Grant from the National Institutes of Health

September 18, 2025

5-year UG3/UH3 grant will fund the optimization and early-stage development of atai's novel 5-HT2A/2C receptor agonists with non-hallucinogenic potential for opioid use disorder

NEW YORK and AMSTERDAM, Sept. 18, 2025 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- [atai Life Sciences](#) (NASDAQ: ATAI) ("atai" or "Company"), a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company on a mission to develop highly effective mental health treatments to transform patient outcomes, today announced that it has been awarded a multi-year, milestone-driven grant worth up to \$11.4 million by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The UG3/UH3 grant will fund the optimization and early-stage development of atai's novel 5-HT2A/2C receptor agonists with non-hallucinogenic potential for opioid use disorder (OUD).

"This grant award underscores atai's and NIDA's shared dedication to providing meaningful treatment options for those struggling with OUD," stated Glenn Short, Ph.D., Chief Scientific Officer of atai. "This is the first external validation of atai's AI-driven polypharmacology drug discovery approach and its 5-HT2A/2C agonist program. This recognition helps to establish atai as a leader in the non-hallucinogenic 5-HT2A agonist drug space and accelerates the timetable to bring these innovative treatments to patients suffering from addiction."

"The commitment of Federal support to advance innovative and differentiated research in OUD highlights the devastating toll this crisis continues to take on individuals, families, and communities," said Srinivas Rao, M.D., Ph.D., Chief Executive Officer and Co-founder of atai. "This investment demonstrates the urgent need for evidence-based prevention, treatment, and long-term recovery solutions that can truly make a difference."

The grant provides non-dilutive funding to advance atai's 5-HT2A/2C agonist program, focused on developing novel compounds that modulate serotonin receptors implicated in addiction. The funding will support lead optimization, translational proof-of-concept studies, and the toxicology and manufacturing work needed to file an Investigational New Drug (IND) application. The goal is to identify clinical candidates that maintain therapeutic activity against opioid use disorder while minimizing hallucinogenic effects and avoiding 5-HT2B activity, which has been linked to cardiac valvulopathy. If early-stage development milestones are met, atai plans to progress the program into a first-in-human Phase 1 study.

OUD affects 16 million people globally, costing >\$750 billion annually.^{1,2} More than 120,000 opioid-related deaths occur annually worldwide.^{1,3} atai's novel 5-HT2A/2C receptor agonists with non-hallucinogenic potential could support lasting abstinence while reducing the daily treatment burden seen with current OUD therapies.

About atai's Discovery Program

As part of atai's ongoing commitment to developing innovative mental health treatments, the company's discovery program has identified a new class of differentiated 5-HT2A/2C receptor agonists. These novel compounds demonstrate non-hallucinogenic potential, as evidenced by their inability to fully substitute for traditional psychedelics in pre-clinical studies. atai is actively optimizing these compounds and evaluating their therapeutic potential across a range of preclinical models, with the goal of developing safer, polypharmacologic targeted treatments for mental health conditions including substance use disorders, anxiety and depression.

About atai Life Sciences

atai is a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company on a mission to develop highly effective mental health treatments to transform patient outcomes. Our pipeline of psychedelic-based therapies includes BPL-003 (intranasal mebufotenin benzoate) for treatment-resistant depression (TRD), which is being advanced through a strategic investment with Beckley Psytech Limited; VLS-01 (buccal film DMT) also for TRD; and EMP-01 (oral R-MDMA) for social anxiety disorder. All three programs are in Phase 2 clinical development. We are also advancing a drug discovery program to identify novel, non-hallucinogenic 5-HT2AR agonists for TRD. These programs aim to address the complex nature of mental health providing commercially scalable interventional psychiatry therapies that can integrate seamlessly into healthcare systems. For the latest updates and to learn more about our mission, visit www.atai.com or follow us on [LinkedIn](#).

Forward-looking Statements

This press release contains forward-looking statements within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995, as amended. We intend such forward-looking statements to be covered by the safe harbor provisions for forward-looking statements contained in Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the "Securities Act"), and Section 21E of the

Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the "Exchange Act"). The words "believe," "may," "will," "estimate," "continue," "anticipate," "intend," "expect," "anticipate," "initiate," "could," "would," "project," "plan," "potentially," "preliminary," "likely," and similar expressions are intended to identify forward-looking statements, although not all forward-looking statements contain these words. Forward-looking statements include express or implied statements relating to, among other things: our business strategy and plans; the timing, potential success, and plans for atai's 5-HT2A/2C receptor agonists and the plans and objectives of management for future operations, research and development and capital expenditures.

Forward-looking statements are neither promises nor guarantees, but involve known and unknown risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from those projected, including, without limitation, the important factors described in the section titled "Risk Factors" in our most recent Annual Report on Form 10-K filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC"), as such factors may be updated from time to time in atai's other filings with the SEC. atai disclaims any obligation or undertaking to update or revise any forward-looking statements contained in this press release, other than to the extent required by applicable law..

The grant reported in this press release is awarded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse of the National Institutes of Health under number 1UG3DA064403-01. The content of this press release is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health.

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