

USPTO Issues Foundational Patent for Leptin Replacement in Anorexia Nervosa, Exclusively Licensed to Zula Therapeutics

Method-of-use patent gives Zula an exclusive position in leptin replacement for anorexia nervosa

BOSTON, MA, UNITED STATES, August 11, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Zula Therapeutics, Inc. today announced that the United States Patent and Trademark Office issued [U.S. Patent No. 12,651,658](#), titled "Methods for

Treating Anorexia Nervosa and Related Conditions by Administering a Leptin Receptor Agonist." Zula holds exclusive rights under its license with the University of Duisburg-Essen (UDE).



The patent is expected to provide exclusive protection for leptin-based treatment of anorexia nervosa through 2045. Protection extends beyond metreleptin, the drug tested clinically to date, to any leptin receptor agonist.

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We are grateful to the patients, institutions, and funders whose support has allowed us to demonstrate the novelty, symptom improvement, and safety of leptin as a treatment for anorexia thus far.”

Professor Johannes Hebebrand, University of Duisburg-Essen, co-inventor

"This patent gives Zula something rare for a company at our stage: a clear, exclusive foundation for the medicines we intend to build. It protects the use of leptin replacement in anorexia nervosa well into the next decade. With this foundation in place, we are now equipped to pursue the partnerships required to develop the first FDA approved medicine for anorexia nervosa," said Dawn Bardot, PhD, Chief Executive Officer of Zula Therapeutics.

SCIENTIFIC AND CLINICAL FOUNDATION

The patented approach reflects the foundational research of Professor Johannes Hebebrand and his co-inventors, who identified leptin deficiency as an active driver of anorexia nervosa rather than a consequence of starvation. According to his construct of weight loss-induced entrapment,

weight loss itself triggers anorexia via a loss of adipose tissue mass entailing sub-physiological circulating leptin levels. The therapeutic rationale is actively being tested clinically: Dr. Gabriella Milos of University Hospital Zurich, a co-inventor on the patent, is leading an investigator-initiated randomized controlled trial of metreleptin in patients with anorexia nervosa (ClinicalTrials.gov NCT06305182), initiated in 2024 and scheduled to complete enrollment in 2026.

"We are grateful to the patients, institutions, and funders whose support has allowed us to demonstrate the novelty, symptom improvement, and safety of leptin as a treatment for anorexia thus far. Working with Zula by licensing an issued patent gives us, as inventors and clinicians, the opportunity to translate our work into a therapy widely adopted to benefit patients globally," said Professor Johannes Hebebrand, University of Duisburg-Essen, co-inventor.

Metreleptin is not approved by the FDA for the treatment of anorexia nervosa.

CLINICAL COLLABORATION WITH MOUNT SINAI

Zula has entered into a memorandum of understanding with the Center of Excellence in Eating and Weight Disorders at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, led by Thomas Hildebrandt, PsyD, Professor of Psychiatry, to collaborate on the design and execution of clinical studies of leptin replacement in severe anorexia nervosa. The Mount Sinai team is leading a philanthropic fundraising campaign in support of this work, detailed in the Center's [Case for Support](#).

"Having reviewed the case-series evidence and considering our research into leptin as a biomarker for recovery, I believe this science must be tested in a rigorous process designed to achieve an FDA regulatory approval. Mount Sinai has a track record of helping to develop breakthrough psychiatric drugs, and we look forward to working with Zula to conduct the first clinical trials designed to support FDA submission here in New York," said Hildebrandt.

A PATIENT-ADVOCACY PERSPECTIVE

Patient-advocacy leaders have welcomed renewed scientific attention to the biological drivers of eating disorders.

"At NEDA, we educate the public on eating disorders and their biological basis. Despite the severity and prevalence of anorexia nervosa specifically, there are still far too few effective treatments. This research represents the kind of scientific breakthrough our community needs, and we hope this newly issued patent helps investors and philanthropists finance the clinical trials required to turn that research into a medicine for our community," said Jessica Scheer, Chief Executive Officer, National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA).

ABOUT ZULA THERAPEUTICS

Zula Therapeutics is developing the first medicine for anorexia nervosa, the deadliest psychiatric illness and one that still has no approved drug. Headquartered in Boston, Zula is incorporated as a Delaware public benefit corporation. The company maintains a collaborative relationship with Courage Therapeutics, which holds an equity stake in Zula. Additional information is available at www.zulatx.com.

Forward-Looking Statements: This press release contains forward-looking statements involving known and unknown risks and uncertainties. Actual results may differ materially from those anticipated.

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