

# Daily Journal

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# WOMEN

## TOP WOMEN LAWYERS 2019

### Judith A. Hasko

**H**asko is global chair of the life sciences licensing group at Latham & Watkins LLP. Her practice focuses on advising companies developing biotechnology, pharmaceutical, medical device and diagnostic products, and on representing investors in such companies. She deals with a range of technology-based commercial transactions. Prior to law school, she worked at Genentech Inc. in its cardiovascular research department.

“It’s a high-risk, high-reward industry, and there’s a lot going on in that space,” she said. Over the past 12 months she’s been involved in immuno-oncology and other drug deals worth up to \$12 billion.

Hasko said an emerging trend is transactions involving companies whose drugs work well together.

“People are realizing that sometimes if you combine cancer drugs there can be synergistic effects, and a lot of deals are structured around that premise,” she said. “These combinations can come either in the form of an antibody that is designed to target two different molecules involved in cancer, or in the form of a cancer therapy that is combined with other cancer therapies.”

That was the case in one of the year’s major immuno-oncology deals. Hasko helped Agenus Inc., a clinical-stage immune-oncology company, structure its partnership with Gilead Sciences Inc., a research-based biopharmaceutical company. The partnership



will allow the development and commercialization of as many as five novel immune-oncology therapies. Agenus received \$150 million, which included a \$120 million upfront cash payment and a \$30 million equity investment. The agreement also includes about \$1.7 billion in potential future fees.

Hasko said two bispecific antibodies were involved, among other potential products. The bispecific label means each of the antibodies has been engineered to target two different molecules involved in cancer.

“People want these targeted therapies to

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Technology transactions

minimize the side effects of chemo,” Hasko added. “Under the chemo regime, you inhibit cell proliferation, but that is often quite toxic. Now we seek to only attack the tumor. The science is much more promising from a clinical development standpoint.”

She recently helped Tizona Therapeutics Inc., a privately held immunotherapy company, structure a global collaboration with AbbVie Inc., a research-based biopharmaceutical business, to develop and commercialize targeted therapeutics, including an antibody for cancer treatment. Under the deal terms, AbbVie paid Tizona \$105 million for the exclusive option to license the program; AbbVie also made an equity investment in Tizona.

“A novel therapeutic antibody in development by Tizona targets a certain molecule in the tumor microenvironment,” Hasko said. “It is to be dosed alone as well as in combination with an approved immunotherapy and standard chemotherapy.”

As the deals keep coming, “I’m learning every day about the science and the products,” she said. “This is very rewarding.”

— John Roemer