

Daily Journal

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Top **WOMEN LAWYERS** 2020

Judith A. Hasko

While grappling with the implications of a global shutdown, Hasko was presented what she calls “an unusually relevant opportunity”: to represent a biotechnology company in early clinical development of a potential treatment for Covid-19 patients.

Hasko advised privately-held Ridgeback Biotherapeutics LP in a collaboration agreement with big pharma Merck to develop an oral antiviral candidate known as EIDD-2801. The May 2020 deal gives Merck exclusive worldwide rights to develop and commercialize EIDD-2801, while Ridgeback receives an undisclosed upfront payment, milestone payments, and a share of the potential net proceeds.

While meetings and negotiations were conducted remotely, Hasko said both companies were motivated to get the deal finalized so clinicians could get to work.

“I think that transaction was emblematic of this whole time period,” she said. “It’s a great example of people in the industry trying to step up and focus on the endgame.”

Hasko is a partner in the corporate department of Latham & Watkins’ Menlo Park office. She’s also global vice chair of the firm’s healthcare and life sciences practice, advising life sciences companies and

investors in a variety of technology-based commercial transactions.

Hasko recently represented Japan’s Daiichi Sankyo Co. in a multibillion-dollar deal with British-Swedish biopharmaceutical company AstraZeneca to co-develop and commercialize a potential treatment for breast, gastric, non-small cell lung, and colorectal cancers.

The global deal was groundbreaking, Hasko said, because of the broad development goals, cross-border considerations, and the large monetary value of the collaboration. Total payments to Daiichi Sankyo could reach \$6.9 billion if all approvals and milestones are achieved.

Her interest in the intersection of science and law was honed early. From a family with varied scientific and medical training, Hasko studied neurophysiology, ethology, and biopsychology and worked in Genentech Inc.’s cardiovascular research department before pursuing law school.

“I was fascinated by the number of areas of expertise it took to get a product to market. I was enamored with the industry and thought about my own role in it,” she explained. “I like translating scientific terms into words people can work with and helping people understand how to apply that to a business transaction.”

— Jennifer McEntee



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Practice Type:
Corporate